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# HISTORY OF ROME AND THE POPES IN THE MIDDLE AGES

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# HISTORY OF ROME AND THE POPES IN THE MIDDLE AGES

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AUTHORISED ENGLISH TRANSLATION

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# ROME AT THE CLOSE OF THE ANCIENT WORLD

## III.—ROME, BYZANTIUM, AND THE OSTROGOTHS AT THE TIME OF THE REVIVAL OF THE EMPIRE IN ITALY—*continued*

# HISTORY OF ROME AND THE POPES IN THE MIDDLE AGES

## CHAPTER II

### MONASTICISM AND THE HOLY SEE

### The Monasteries before the time of Benedict

361. At the time when Cassiodorus established his colony of Vivarium, with its combination of religious exercises and study, while Benedict ruled the monks at Monte Cassino, conventual life had become popular not only in the East, its earliest home, but also in the West, where, in many places, it thrived exceedingly. As yet, however, no general rule of life was followed in the monasteries of the West. Such a rule was evolved by St. Benedict's foundation, and it was already beginning to be accepted and applied even in the lifetime of Cassiodorus, who, however, was not acquainted with it.

Such was the growth of monasticism in the Church, that the tree spread its manifold branches over Italy, North Africa, and Spain; over the ancient Provinces of the Roman Empire in the North, and over the newly founded States, even as far as Britain and Ireland.

In the sixth century, in the monastery of Bangor, on the east coast of Ireland, three thousand monks, supporting themselves by manual labour, and, divided into seven choirs, kept up day and night an unceasing service of song. In Gaul, in the beginning of the fifth century, according to Sulpicius Severus, a contemporary, no less than two thousand monks assembled for the funeral of the great founder of monasteries, St. Martin of Tours. In Spain, St. Martin of Bracara (Braga), who worked among the Suevi of Gallæcia, took as his example the monastic and apostolic ministry of his namesake of Tours;

he gathered around him troops of monks, and with their help converted to Catholicism the local Arian tribes.[1]

The island of Lerinum, from the beginning of the fifth century, became the site of flourishing monastic schools, where civilisation and learning found a refuge, and which served as seminaries for the training of worthy bishops. John Cassian, whose works were so much in demand, from his retreat at Marseilles, laboured to promote asceticism among the monasteries of ancient and more recent foundation. He did in Southern Gaul what had been done earlier, and on similar lines, in Northern Italy by Eusebius of Vercelli and Ambrose of Milan, whose enthusiasm led countless persons of both sexes to embrace virginity either in private retirement or in the life of the cloister.

Augustine watched over his monasteries at Carthage, Tagaste, and Hippo; Rufinus laboured in the cause of monasticism at Aquileia; and later, after a visit to the monks of Egypt and Asia, with the help of Urseius, abbot of Pinetum, he introduced the Rule of St. Basil into many Western monasteries. Finally, Jerome, the most eloquent champion of asceticism and religious vows, was so successful in Rome, even in the highest circles, that we hear him exclaiming in astonishment: "Rome has become like Jerusalem. How many convents are rising for virgins! Who can count the crowds of monks in the City? Formerly it was considered a disgrace to serve God in this state; now it is an honour, and has become quite fashionable."[2]

Augustine, who had visited these Roman monasteries, recalls them with pleasure. "I know many of them," he writes, "as homes of saints, where, in the midst of brethren who live together in love, piety, and freedom, there ever presides one

[1] The epitaph which Martin of Braga (*Dumiensis*) composed for himself alludes to Martin of Tours as his example. DE ROSSI, *Inscr. christ.*, 2, 1, 270. Ibid., p. 269, de Rossi gives two inscriptions from the head monastery founded by Martin in Dumium, near Braga, and from the monastic cathedral. The labours of his monks among the mixed Germanic races of the locality are recalled in the verses: "*Immanes variasque pio sub foedere Christi | Adsciscis gentes. Alamannus, Saxo, Toringus, | Pannonius, Rugus, Sclavus, Nara, Sarmata, Datus, | Ostrogothus, Francus, Burgundus, Dacus, Alanus | Te duce nosse Deum gaudent, tua signa Suevus | Admirans*," &c.

[2] "*Ut . . . gauderemus, Romam factam Ierusalem. Crebra virginum monasteria, monachorum innumerabilis multitudo*," &c. *Ep.* 122 *ad Principiam*, c. 8. The ascetical principles preached by Jerome and other writers have been misunderstood by the Church's enemies. See, against the views expressed by Harnack in *Das Wesen des Christenthums*, S. HÖVELER, *Prof. Harnack und die kath. Askese*, 1902.

distinguished for moral dignity, wisdom, and ecclesiastical learning."[1]

362. The history and gradual development of monastic life in Rome deserves our close attention. It began before Augustine and Jerome, even before Athanasius visited Rome with his escort of Egyptian monks. There is no proof that these visitors to Rome from the deserts of the Nile were the first to make Romans acquainted with the cœnobitic life. From the remarks of early authors the opposite may be gathered, namely, that already before the fourth decade of the fourth century, besides solitary ascetics of either sex, there existed in Rome conventual communities, particularly of men; this manner of life had not, however, as yet attained popularity, nor was it followed by people of high rank.[2]

It is nevertheless true that the oldest Roman monastery, of which we know the name and situation, belongs to a later period. It was founded by Pope Xystus III. outside the City on the Appian Way *ad catacumbas*, *i.e.* nigh the temporary tomb of the Apostles, and was dedicated to St. Sebastian. Through the discovery of numerous inscriptions we have, moreover, fairly trustworthy evidence of the existence of a convent of consecrated virgins on the *Ager Veranus* beside St. Lawrence's Basilica outside the City. The Basilica of St. Agnes seems also to have had at an early date its convent. Near the Tomb of St. Peter we find a convent in the time St. Galla, where this noble Roman matron passed the days of her widowhood. The *Liber pontificalis* also tells us that Leo the Great founded a monastery near St. Peter's Tomb, meaning probably that named after SS. John and Paul. At St. Lawrence's, too, a monastery for men was built near the convent for women by Pope Hilary, Leo's successor, who also erected another monastery within the City at some spot unknown.

It is worthy of notice, that, as the instances cited show, beginning with the monastery near the Apostles' Tomb on the Appian, the early conventual establishments of Rome

[1] *De moribus cath. eccl.*, 1, c. 70.

[2] Cp. E. SPREITZENHOFER, O.S.B., *Die Entwicklung des alten Mönchthums in Italien von seinen ersten Anfängen bis St. Benedikt* (Wien, 1894), p. 5 ff. J. WILPERT, *Die gottgeweihten Jungfrauen in den ersten Jahrh. der Kirche* (Freiburg im Br., 1892). This work makes great use of the monuments, and the supplement (p. 82 ff.), on the "*Grabschriften von Jungfrauen aus römischen Katakomben*," is of particular interest.

seem all to have been attracted to the burial-places of the more famous saints.

Thus, too, the saintly Paulinus of Nola and Terasia, his wife, after dedicating themselves to the religious life, built a joint ascetic or conventual dwelling beside the Basilica and Tomb of St. Felix of Nola, the present Cimitile. From the apartments, where they prayed and chanted psalms, they could look into the sanctuary of the patron martyr of Nola.[1]

We may add that the monasteries of Rome were established in the neighbourhood of famous shrines and Basilicas, not merely to increase the devotion of the communities, but also that the monks might supervise the services at these places. The due performance of the services in the memorial Basilicas and Catacombs was better insured, when, beside the city clergy who only went out to them at stated intervals, there were the pious inmates of the monasteries in attendance on the spot; such was the case at the *cœmeterium ad catacumbas*, whilst the monks of St. Lawrence's did the same for the *cœmeterium* of St. Hippolytus and for that of St. Cyriaca.[2]

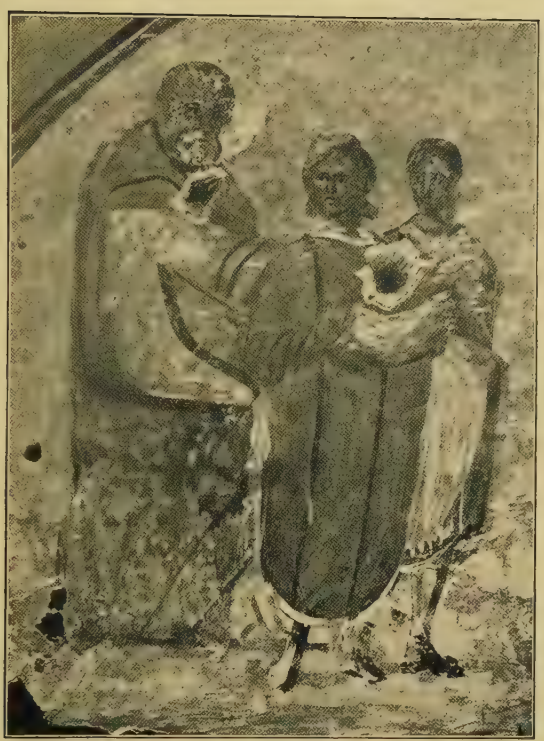
A reminder of the earliest consecrated virgins of Rome is contained in the Catacomb of St. Priscilla. This is the picture above the tomb of a virgin who had received the veil from the Church's hierarchy, and who is here represented in the act of being vested with the symbol of perpetual virginity (Ill. 169). The bishop, seated upon his *cathedra*, with his deacon beside him, points with his finger to a figure of the Virgin Mother of God on the same fresco, as if to show the candidate that lofty example of virtue in the new state of life into which she is entering. The same virgin, with her veil, appears in larger proportions in the centre of the picture, praying with arms outstretched. The veil she has received falls over her head and upon her tunic (*tunica discincta*), which is embroidered with a double stripe (*clavus*) down the front. (Ill. 170).[3]

How simple and expressive is the language of the epitaphs of

[1] *Vita S. Paulini*, c. 18, 43; *P.L.*, LXI., 51, 99.

[2] DE ROSSI, *Roma sott.*, III., 529.

[3] We owe closer knowledge and an excellent reproduction of this picture to J. Wilpert (*Die gottgeweihten Jungfrauen*, &c., p. 60 ff. and Pl. I.). I consider the recent attempts made to give the picture a different meaning quite unsuccessful. Cp. WILPERT, *Die Katakombengemälde*, Pl. 79 f.



Ill. 169.—Bestowal of the Veil on a Consecrated Virgin.

(From a painting in the Cemetery of St. Priscilla. After Wilpert.)

the Church's consecrated virgins, compared with the titles bestowed on the Vestals. In the inscriptions on the statues, whereby agreeably with the decrees of the High Priests they were immortalised, the chastity of the *Vestales Maximae* is extolled in elaborate terms and with much parade, because forsooth they had observed the law of the goddess, *i.e.* the vow taken for the years of their priestly service. The Christian tombs, on the contrary, have, as a rule, much simpler, though far more telling, epitaphs. For instance: "[the Tomb] of the worthy and well-deserving virgin Adeodata; she rests here in peace, awaiting the order of her Bridegroom, Christ." "Bellicia, a most faithful virgin, rests here in peace." "Aurelia Agapetilla, a handmaid of God, sleeps here in peace." "In this grave rests Alexandra, a consecrated virgin of happy memory, who departed to meet Christ, and to be taken up to heaven," and so forth. Pope Damasus extols his sister Irene in a touching, poetical epitaph for her zeal in following Christ, "to whom she had consecrated herself in holy chastity"; he closes with the prayer: "Now that God [thy Bridegroom] has come, remember us, oh virgin, that thy lamp may give us light before the Lord."[1]

Ill. 170.—Consecrated Virgin with the Veil.
From a painting in the Cemetery of St. Priscilla.

It is not always easy to tell whether such epitaphs found in Rome refer to male or female ascetics dwelling alone, or to inmates of conventual houses. Even when monasticism had thoroughly established itself in the city, asceticism continued to be practised by individuals, families, and even large associations, according to rules of their own choosing and independently of the monasteries.

[1] The epitaphs in Wilpert, p. 86 f. The poem by Damasus, ibid., p. 77, and in de Rossi, *Bull. arch. crist.*, 1889, p. 146 ff.

St. Fulgentius of Ruspe, when staying in Rome at the time of Theodoric's arrival, visited not only the monastic establishments, but also certain noble families well known to him, who practised renunciation of the world in its very midst. As his letters show, he remained in constant friendly intercourse with many followers of this mode of life. He knew and valued Theodore, the senator and ex-consul, who dwelt with his wife as with a sister, wholly devoted to virtue; he speaks of Theodore's pious mother, the guardian-angel of the ascetic association in her illustrious house; to this association belonged also the noble Romulus. Fulgentius particularly praises the virgin Proba, who was a member of the Anician family. He warmly extols her for feeding the poor at her table, "regardless of splendour of dress, scorning the luxurious bath, the enervating couch, salves, paint, and the jovial companionship of society."[1]

The actual monasteries of Rome received valuable support from, and were in constant spiritual intercourse with, such people of high standing, who had devoted their lives to godliness.

363. A yet more important prop of the Religious Orders was the Roman Papacy. We still possess a whole series of decrees issued by the Popes from the fourth century onwards, dealing with monastic affairs; some defend the monks against injustice; others regulate their mode of life, and are concerned with discipline; others, again, deal with the appointment of religious to offices, clerical or otherwise, &c. The Popes insisted strictly on the inviolability of monastic vows when once taken. Pope Siricius in 385 despatched a circular letter to Bishop Himerius of Tarragona, containing instructions against breaches of conventual chastity. Leo I. also, in 443, in his epistle to Rusticus, Bishop of Narbonne, appointed punishments for monks or nuns who had proved false to their vows. Leo's efforts to secure among the monasteries unity and peace in the domain of orthodoxy were felt as far as Palestine. The Eastern monks, easily excited and much too prone to fanaticism, often took the side of the heretics. Having done this, they were wont to support the worst errors of Faith, not only by the moral influence of their outwardly strict and mortified lives, but also by acts of violence, which they

[1] Cp. *e.g.* FULGENTIUS, *Ep.* 2 *ad Gallam; ep.* 3 and 4 *ad Probam; ep.* 6 *ad Theodorum; P.L.*, LXV., 314, 324 ff., 348.

carried out at the head of a rabble ever ready to follow them blindly. Pope Leo in his letters had to bring into play all his authority to allay the excitement among the monks of Palestine, who had been led astray by Nestorian and Eutychian doctrines. We have already related how much Pope Hormisdas in Rome was harassed and assailed by certain over zealous Scythian monks. He patiently opposed and overcame their turbulence.[1]

It is thus seen that in monasticism all was not equally good, nor has the golden stream of zeal and strenuous asceticism at any time been altogether devoid of dross. Though conventual life on the one hand matured the richest fruits of self-sacrifice, and made itself valuable by promoting the spread of the Church with its teaching and morality, yet on the other the solicitude of the papacy and episcopate for the welfare of the monasteries repeatedly obliged them to intervene in order to remove the abuses so ready to make their appearance.

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In Italy, among the pre-Benedictine monks of the fifth and sixth centuries, two things especially gave rise to dissatisfaction. Even the Imperial Government, which, in its desire to promote monasticism and increase its privileges, had legislated for the maintenance of good order, could not make an end of these abuses. One was the roaming about of monks of all sorts. Crowds of them were ceaselessly on the move. For good reasons of their own, they were unwilling to settle in any monastery, preferring to call in at each monastery in turn for a few days as passing guests; when they went they left behind them a sad reputation for worldliness, self-will, and the vastness of their appetite and thirst. These were the *monachi gyrovagi*, of whom St. Benedict has something to say. The other evil was due to small groups, sometimes of only two or three, uniting together without any conventual or ecclesiastical superior, with no fixed rule proved by experience, but living very much as they pleased. "In reality they serve the world," says Benedict, "and belie God with their habit and their shaven pate. This bad kind of monks we call Sarabaitæ."

[1] Siricius: JAFFÉ-KALTENBR., n. 255. Leo to Rusticus, ibid., n. 544. Leo to the Palestinian monks, ibid., n. 500. Hormisdas, vol. ii. p. 302 ff. Cp. SPREITZENHOFER, *Entwicklung des Mönchthums*, p. 109 ff.; *Die kirchl. Stellung des Mönchthums.*

Cassian was already acquainted with the name and with what it stood for.[1]

The earliest conventual establishments where good discipline was observed, were under the Bishop. Under his supervision, and guided by their superior, who was one taken from among them, they followed a settled rule of life, had their regular occupations and penitential practices, their time being duly apportioned to prayer, labour, and recreation.

364. As we are aware, there existed in the West no one Rule obeyed in all the monasteries. Nor were there any Religious Orders such as the world knew them later. The customs of the monks varied from country to country; even within the same province or city the observances of the monasteries might differ materially. At the same time, even then, two observances had come to be valued above all others. These were the rules of the famous Greek Father, Basil of Cæsarea, and of the Latin Abbot, Cassian. Both were to serve to some extent as models for the future conventual rule of life.

The rule of St. Basil owed its vogue in Italy to Rufinus. This rule was characterised by the strict conception of monasticism prevalent in the East. Its rigour was even increased by many of its observers, who embodied in it customs derived from the Egyptians. The latter practices had come to their knowledge through the widely read *Life of St. Anthony*, written by Athanasius, and the lively tales told by travellers of the Nile country and its saintly monks. But Cassian and his predecessor, Martin of Tours, appealed to the Western character better than Rufinus, Basil, and the Egyptians. The life of the great wonder-worker and founder of monasteries in Gaul proved attractive. His biography, written by Sulpicius Severus, found its way throughout the Roman Empire, like the *Life of St. Anthony* by Athanasius. In Rome it was very favourably received, and was soon accepted by Romans elsewhere.

Cassian of Massilia owed his influence to the fact that his practical insight had taught him to modify the practices of the Easterns. He did not consider the extraordinary examples of certain favoured saints to be binding upon all, but took into account

[1] *Regula S. Benedicti*, c. 1, *De generibus monachorum*. Cp. CASSIAN, *Collat.*, 18, c. 7.

the customs and views prevailing in the West. It seems that, before Benedict's time, Cassian's *Institutions* formed the standard in most of the monasteries of Italy and Rome. Even Cassiodorus could still recommend the inmates of the religious establishments founded by him to study earnestly Cassian's ascetic writings.

Cassian, after his long stay in Egypt and Palestine, paid a visit to Rome in 405, and it is a remarkable coincidence that the *Liber pontificalis* should ascribe to Innocent, the Pope of that day, a constitution on monastic Rules. Innocent may have seized the opportunity of the presence in the city of this experienced and illustrious man to lay down some general principles and observances which might produce order amidst the many "Rules" then followed.[1]

The general scheme of the monastic life has at all times been based upon the same principles. Subsequent efforts made for the improvement of conventual life have always respected these fundamental principles. Such an endeavour was that of St. Cæsarius of Arles, who drew up a monastic Rule about the year 520, and secured its adoption in Southern Gaul. Another similar one was that made by St. Equitius, called by St. Gregory "the Father of many monasteries," in the Province of Valeria, in the neighbourhood of the Lacus Fucinus. Yet another was initiated by St. Columban, who, towards the close of the sixth century, restored monastic life in Gaul and in Upper Italy, and whose strict Rule, with its corporal chastisements, remained long in use. Finally, we must not forget the Patriarch of mediæval monasticism in the West, Benedict of Nursia.[2]

The universal basic principles of the Religious life comprise, first, voluntary poverty, *i.e.* the renunciation of personal possession or control of property; then chastity, or the voluntary heroic struggle with fleshly lusts; thirdly, obedience, *i.e.* the surrender of the subject's erring will in submission to the enlightened guidance of a Superior, who is himself governed by the Rule. This threefold sacrifice is offered to God by irrevocable vows.

Further, in the monastery, according to the Church's mind, prayer and work are combined as elements of the daily life. By prayer here is understood chiefly the official, public prayers recited

[1] *Liber pont.*, 1, 220, *Innocentius*, n. 57: "*Hic constitutum fecit de omnem ecclesiam et de regulis monasteriorum et de Iudaeis et de paganis.*"

[2] *Dial.* 1, c. 4. Gregory says of Equitius: "*multorum in eadem provincia* [*Valeriae*] *monasteriorum pater exstitit.*" Lacus Fucinus is near Celano.

in the Church's name, *i.e.* the canonical hours with their Psalms, Antiphons, Responses, Lessons, &c. Work in the early monasteries of which we are speaking was either the mental labour of study, teaching, preaching to the people or evangelising the heathen; or in the case of most of the monks, simple manual toil of any kind. The monks were nearly all laymen, very few being in Holy Orders. Palladius, in his account of the Egyptian monks, says: "One of them is busy with work in the fields, another in the garden, a third in the bakehouse, a fourth at the forge; this one works as a carpenter and joiner, that one cleans and mends clothes; another tans leather, and yet another makes shoes; here one copies beautiful and dainty books, there another weaves baskets large and small." To the abbess of a Roman convent, Demetrias, a daughter of one of the highest families in the city, St. Jerome writes: "As soon as you have finished your prayers in choir, let not the wool from your hands; let your fingers ceaselessly work at the shreds of the distaff, or press the woof in the shuttles of the loom. Collect the produce of the sisters' industry to arrange it for weaving, and look well how the weavers do their work. If badly done, find fault with it, and show them how to do it."[1]

In this manner Latin conventual life, even before St. Benedict, had assumed an eminently practical form. It became a social power, offering useful and religious interests even to the untalented, and at the same time raising better minds to lofty spiritual heights.

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365. Benedict had been pre-ordained to re-establish Western monasticism upon firmer ground by means of a mild and wise Rule, which was to become the common property of later monasteries. His ordinances, drafted after long reflection and under a special illumination from above, in many ways softened the rigour of the previous forms of monastic discipline. They demanded nothing beyond the powers of any member of the community. All over and above this was left to the free will of the individual, which the Rule served, however, to spur. Like that of Cassian, this Rule suited the Western character. Each monastery was to

[1] PALLADIUS, *Hist. Lausiaca*, c. 39. HIERONYMUS, *Ep.* 130, c. 15. Many such recommendations to labour are to be found.

be as a family under an Abbot's fatherly government. This introduction of a kind of family feeling, and likewise the authority and freedom which were combined in the Rule, adapted it to the needs of the mediæval world better than any other previous monastic regulations.

All unconscious of the far-reaching character of his innovation, Benedict was really supplanting the monasticism of the Roman world by that of the Middle Ages.

The asceticism of subsequent centuries bore the stamp of the powerful yet peaceful and fatherly mind of the founder of Monte Cassino. His little book of rules, with its simple, practical regulations, prepared under divine Providence a seed-ground upon which great Churchmen were to be matured: Popes like Gregory I. and Gregory VII.; strong Bishops and enlightened doctors like Anselm and Bede; bold and self-sacrificing missioners like Augustine of England and Boniface of Germany, who, with troops of industrious monks, went forth into the wilds of unbelief to spread Christian civilisation and impart peace to the hearts of men estranged from God.

## Subiaco and Monte Cassino in the History of Rome and St. Benedict

366. St. Benedict, in his longing after God, first sought peace for his own soul; he wished to dwell in retirement and prayer. Still young, and surrounded by the attractions of high social position, he quitted Rome, where he had received his education, and journeyed up the valley of the foaming Anio beyond Tibur, till he found a spot, remote from all the world, where he could imitate in prayer and penance the example set by the saintly hermits of Egypt. The cave which he chose overlooked the walls of a splendid Imperial villa built by Nero and lying in the valley.[1]

Whoever visits now this memorable grotto, the Sacro Speco of Subiaco, against which the monastery church was erected at a later date (Ill. 171),[2] and then wanders through the ruins below of

[1] GREG., *Dial.* 2, c. 1 (*P.L.*, LXVI., 128): "*Deserti loci secessum petiit, cui Sublacus vocabulum est, qui ab Romana urbe quadraginta fere millibus distans frigidas atque perspicuas emanat aquas*," &c. Nothing is here said of the Imperial Villa.

[2] The grotto lies behind the tall Gothic arches which support the building. To the right, on the hill, is seen the monastery of Romanus. To the left, in the valley, on the river bank, is St. Scholastica's, below which lie the ruins of Nero's Villa.

Nero's structure, which still retains its grandeur, will feel deeply impressed by the historical contrasts gathered together in this picturesque corner of the wilderness. We have here a memorial of the abandoned luxury to which Pagan Rome descended under the rule of a mad Cæsar, and likewise the rocky monument to the virtue, self-sacrifice, and godliness of early monasticism, for the revival of which Christian Rome had sent her noblest son.

The monks who, under Benedict's personal direction, established their bare cells in the Villa, could well say to themselves that, with their poverty and contempt for the world, they had literally put their foot upon the sinking glamour of worldly pomp.

The Villa, long since deserted, was doubtless, when Benedict came, standing as a ruin half hidden by the thickets. Yet even to-day its general plan can be traced, and up to quite recently valuable works of art have been found beneath it. The fine marble statue of the naked youth playing ball—a Greek work—came from this classic soil, and has now enriched the Museum of the Thermæ in Rome. It was discovered by Dom Leone Allodi in 1884, at a depth of nearly 30 feet. It may be that the earliest monks saw it standing beside the river or the lake, where it probably formed part of a larger group.[1]

The grounds of Nero's Villa stretched on both sides of the bed of the Anio, the banks being joined by a lofty bridge, above which the stream was held back by a dam, so as to form a lake of considerable depth. This lake was the scene of the story related by Gregory the Great, of Benedict's disciple Maurus, who, at his abbot's command, walked boldly upon it without sinking to save his drowning comrade Placidus.[2]

Besides this lake there were one or two others, lying higher. They, too, were formed by strong barriers of masonry, which retained the descending water. It was from these lakes that the locality took its name of Sublacus, now Subiaco.

The neighbourhood of this romantic site fixed upon by Benedict was not at that time utterly uninhabited. A monastery existed already not far from the grotto, standing on the hill behind Subiaco. It was one of its pious inmates, Romanus by name,

[1] A. DE RIDDER, *Rev. archéol.*, 1897, pp. 265–290, *La statue de Subiaco.* Cp. BRUNN-BRUCKMANN, *Antike Denkmäler*, I, i. (1891), Pl. 56, p. 45 ff.

[2] *Dial.* 2, c. 7; *P.L.*, LXVI., 146.

Ill. 171.—Subiaco. Monastery in St. Benedict's Wilderness above Nero's Villa.
(Photo by Anderson.)

who undertook to supply Benedict in his hermitage with bread, letting it down to the anchorite's cell by means of a rope.

Not until three years had passed in utter seclusion, would Benedict enter into communication with his neighbours. He began by instructing the poor herdsmen, who were wont to clamber up to his cave. Later on, yielding to pressure, he undertook the direction of a headless monastery at Vicovaro, but returned to Subiaco when the monks, in disgust at his severity, had attempted to rid themselves of him by poison. In the vicinity of his beloved grotto, on the river banks and on the heights, he founded twelve monasteries, each holding twelve monks under abbots of his own nomination; so numerous were those attracted by his reputation. Among his monks there were even some Goths. Illustrious Romans, too, began to send him their boys to be educated and prepared for the monastic life. The patrician Tertullus confided his son Placidus to Benedict's skilful hands, while Equitius sent him Maurus, a youth of great promise, who soon became his master's assistant in the "school of God's service.[1]

Subiaco was not, however, to be the chief centre of the new monastic life which took its birth there. The enmity of Florentius, the priest, who even tried to tempt the monks to sin, drove Benedict from this spot, to seek a refuge in the still remoter district of Monte Cassino.

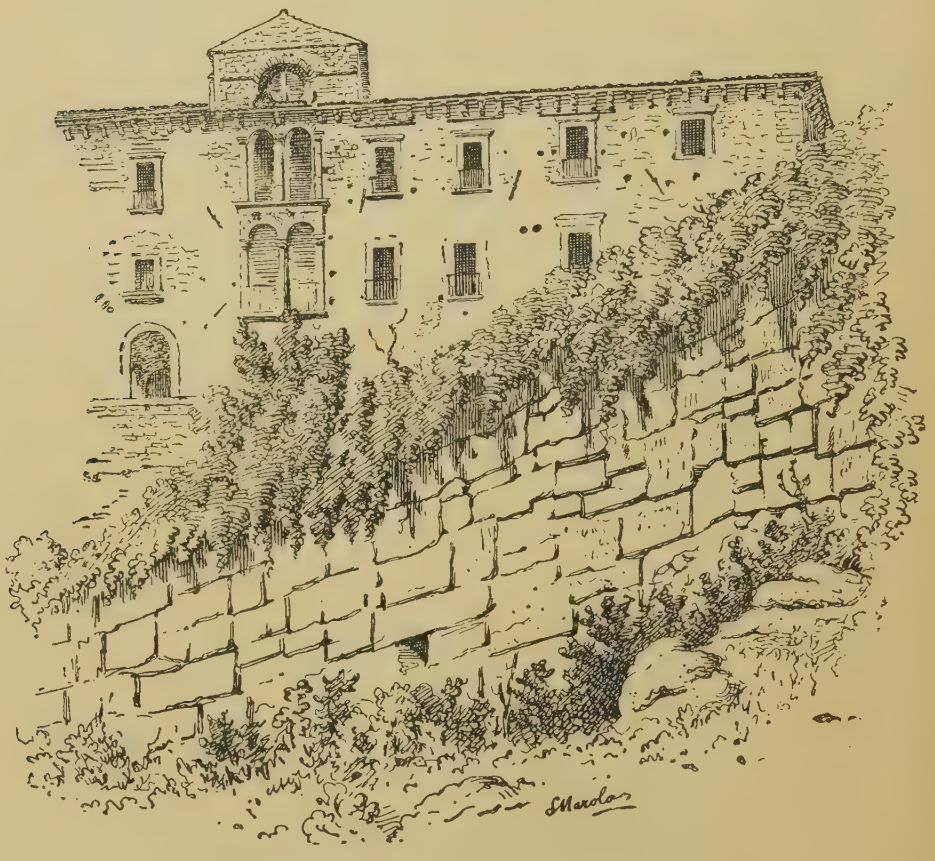
367. There, high above the little town of Castrum Cassinum, on a mountain with an exquisite view of the Campanian plain, the saint found a new haven of peace. There he settled down within the walls of an old Pelasgic colony (Ill. 172).[2] The masonry, of so-called Cyclopean architecture, consisting of hewn blocks of rock piled one upon the other to form colossal walls, had long since been abandoned. At some points they are still intact, and it may be seen that they descend from the mountain in two long divergent arms as far as the hollow in which Cassinum lay. This

[1] For the details, consult the life of St. Benedict by Gregory the Great; it forms the whole second book of his Dialogues. A Goth is spoken of in chap. 6: "*Alio quoque tempore Gothus quidam pauper spiritu ad conversionem venit.*" By "*conversio*" is always meant the entering on the religious state. Chap. 4, on the arrival of Placidus and of Maurus.

[2] Drawn by Marola from a photograph. It is on this side that the monastic buildings present the most interest, though, for the greater part, they were erected more recently.

gigantic stronghold could easily be adapted to serve as a protection for a large establishment of monks.[1]

With all its majestic beauty, the place was, however, scarcely congenial to a Christian, for it was yet a retreat of heathen idolatry. The last of the pagans still rallied there round an altar of Apollo; unlettered rustics still ascended these heights to offer sacrifice.



Ill. 172.—Monte Cassino and the Cyclopean Wall.

Since Gregory the Great, in his biography of St. Benedict written fifty years later, speaks of the *Ara* as having existed there "from the hoariest antiquity," and since he mentions a "grove for demon worship" in connection with the Temple of

[1] On these walls, see Domenico Bartolini, *L'antico Cassino e il primitivo monastero di S. Benedetto* (Monte Cassino, 1880, Pl.). The present writer can, however, testify from observation that Bartolini's work stands in need of modification, and that his reconstruction of the ancient monastery and of its churches is also faulty.

Ill. 173.—St. Benedict on a Throne in front of John, Abbot of Monte Cassino.

(Eleventh-century miniature. Codex Cass. 55.)

Apollo,[1] we may take it that the worship of Apollo at this spot dated from the time of the earliest settlers, and that the *Ara* consisted of the usual tall square of masonry similar to others found upon hills and dating from Pelasgic or Cyclopean times. Apollo in those early days was called Pitosyrus.[2]

It may be that the Saint was attracted to this locality not only by its safe and airy situation, but also by the very fact that it was still a resort of the heathen. He may have conceived the idea of completing the conquest of Italy for the God of the Christians. At any rate, the monastery established by Benedict upon this hill dedicated to the false god of light, was destined more than any other to radiate the light of Christian civilisation over barbarian Europe by means of the virtue and learning of its monks.

Benedict smashed the statue of the god, broke down the altar, and erected instead a small church of St. John the Baptist. In place of the Temple of Apollo, however, he built another little church to St. Martin of Tours, the patron saint of monks. The grove, which he burnt down, afforded him and his sturdy brethren ground for cultivation.

The earliest monastery on the hill, of which the visitor naturally will seek the traces, seems to have been built inside the south-west angle of the Cyclopean Acropolis, near St. Martin's church. To this day the monks will have it that in this portion of the enlarged monastery there are still mementoes of the founder. The church of St. John, on the contrary, with Benedict's tomb, must be sought for at the opposite end of the present buildings, where it once stood all alone upon the gentle slope of the hill, now occupied by the large conventual church, with its two picturesque forecourts. The whole arrangement of the place is made clear by an early engraving,[3] which shows the great monastery upon the projecting crag above the ruins of the ancient Cassinum, and the small mediæval town of S. Germano, and also gives the names of the surrounding sites mentioned in early Benedictine history.

The monastery of Monte Cassino was founded in 529. St.

[1] GREG., *Dial.* 2, c. 8: "*ubi* **vetustissimum** *fanum fuit, in quo ex antiquorum more gentilium a stulto rusticorum populo Apollo colebatur. Circumquaque etiam in cultu daemonum luci succreverant.*"

[2] DE CARA, *Gli Hethei-Pelasgi*, 1 (Roma, 1894), p. 476.

[3] See GATTOLA, *Accessiones ad historiam Montis Cassini*, 1, Pl. 1. It was at St. Scholastica's Convent, shown on this old print, that there took place the meeting between Benedict and his sister, described by Gregory the Great (2, c. 33).

Benedict dwelt here for rather less than fifteen years. He stamped out idolatry in the neighbourhood, and implanted in the hearts of faithful brethren, whose number was ever on the increase, the love of monastic virtues. Disciples soon carried the spirit of their master and his Rule to other monasteries. At an early date, mediæval art was wont to portray the Saint, with his Rule, in front of his disciples (Ill. 173).[1] Such pictures, pervaded as they are by love and veneration for St. Benedict, charm us by the quaintness of the figures, and are of interest as showing the plain dress of the early monks and abbots (Ill. 174).[2]

368. The spirit of the Benedictine Rule is none other than the spirit of the Gospel, applied in a life based upon the evangelical counsels. This is distinctly stated in the short introduction which Benedict wrote for his Rule. Its expression is as clear and fresh as the balmy air breathed in that monastery on the mountain-top. Everything that the Saint says in this preface, and then applies in the book itself, is in fact as distinct and lucid as the southern sky, which covers Monte Cassino and the verdant plains of the Campagna below it.

"Hear, my son," says the Founder to his disciples, adapting the words of Scripture, "the precepts of thy teacher, and incline unto them thine ear and thy heart. Receive gladly thy father's counsel, and obey it. Return unto God by the difficult path of obedience, for thou hast forsaken Him by following thine own will in disobedience. I speak unto thee, who hast resolved to forsake thine own desires and to enter the service of the true King, our Lord Jesus Christ. Thou wouldst fain be girded with the fine

[1] After TOSTI, *Vita di san Benedetto*, p. 201, the plate having been lent me by the monastery of Monte Cassino. John is seen presenting the Founder with his book. Behind Benedict is seen a figure which perhaps is a symbol of inspiration. In the background is an Oratory with circular apse.

[2] TOSTI, ibid. The inscription, in Leonine verse and in the characters usual among the Cassinese scribes of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, is as follows :

"*Accipe dignanter quod fert, pater alme, Iohannes,*
*Munus et eterni sibi confer munera regni.*
*Supplicis ac votis pius inde faveto Leonis,*
*Est studio cuius opus actum codicis huius.*"

Leo, then Abbot, holds the book and introduces John, the archpriest of Marsico, at whose expense the work has been written. St. Benedict, like the Abbot, wears the ample choir *cucullus* or cowl; the priest an embroidered tunic, a stole, and planeta, though where he is seen kneeling he has divested himself of all save the tunic. The monks' common dress was that shown on the previous illustration, *i.e.* the short sleeveless tunic worn over a long one. There, however, it has an embroidered border; the Founder is shown with a mappula resting on his knees.

Accipe dignæ natæ quod fert pauca elmeroharmæ.
Munus & tantum sibi confer munera regum.
Supplicis ac voti pius inde fac ut eo lætus.
Est studio cultus opus æratum codicis hujus.

Ill. 174.—Dress of the Monks according to one of the oldest Miniatures at Monte Cassino.

(Codex Cass. 99.)

and powerful weapons of obedience. Pray then, before all, most earnestly, that strength from above may be granted thee to carry out the good that thou hast begun."

A frequent complaint of recent years repeats in various forms the saying of Gregorovius, that the restrictions imposed by conventual discipline lie "beyond the province of nature." St. Benedict, too, was well aware that the life of perfection is no natural vocation, nor a thing prescribed by Christianity for every one, or even for the many. To embrace the state of the so-called evangelical counsels and the sacrifices they involve, he regarded as suitable only for those who felt within them the call of the love of God. The Saint and the thousands who followed him on his rugged road, knew also, and felt it strongly, that their aim was not agreeable to that lower human nature, which they had to bear within them to the grave. But in their resolve to follow after Christ, they were determined to struggle against those lower inclinations, so as to set free the higher nature within them.

At the very commencement of his Rule, in the words quoted above, the Founder anticipates the modern objection that cloistral life is contrary to the "purposes of nature," though it is scarcely likely that he foresaw the need of dealing with a grievance such as this. He shows clearly that his words are not intended for all believers, but only for him who wishes to enter into the especial service of Christ the King; such a one he urges to pray God fervently that he may obtain the necessary grace, just because the path upon which he is entering is far above man's natural calling, inclinations, or powers.

"This life of virginity," as Ambrose said long before, speaking to both the faithful and the heathen, "is not of this world, nor a discovery of nature. Who can deny that it came down from Heaven with Christianity? You scarcely find it in this world, until the Redeemer took upon Him our flesh. . . . His advent was needed to infuse the higher spirit of Heaven into the body of man. . . . Ye are not of this world," proceeds the Milanese Doctor, speaking to those who had elected to follow chaste lives. "Ye were indeed given to the world, but the world could not retain you."[1]

According to the testimony of all the great men who adopted

[1] AMBROSE, *De Virg.*, 1, c. 3; *P.L.*, XVI., 192, 203: "*Quis neget hanc vitam fluxisse de coelis? . . . Saeculum vos habere meruit, tenere non potuit.*"

the life of sacrifice and prayer within the Benedictine Order, the Founder's promise of the purest and noblest joys to his true sons never was belied. In the forefront of his Rule he draws the attention of those entering the monastery to these spiritual pleasures. "What can be sweeter, O dearest Brethren," he says, "than the Lord's invitation to us? See with what gentle kindness He shows us the Way of Life. Let us then gird up our loins with faith and zeal in good works, and let us walk, guided by the Gospel, in His ways, that we may be worthy to see Him who has called us to His kingdom."

With wonderful solicitude for all the details of conventual life, and with a moderation and tact testifying to his real genius, the Saint, after thus addressing his disciples, proceeds to give the rules for the regulation of the life of the monks, for the guidance of the family or community by the abbot, and for the due exercise of virtue and mortification. Prayer in choir and manual labour, study and recreation, punishment of the unruly, relations with the outside world, reception of guests—in short, the whole life of those committed to his care is adjusted wisely and affectionately. The fact that the Rule, in many cases, leaves the decision to the abbot, gives it a character of singular elasticity and freedom.[1]

This is, of course, not the place to examine in detail this masterpiece of legislation. What is noteworthy is, that for almost everything enjoined by the Rule, points of comparison exist with earlier monastic constitutions. Benedict created no new manner of life, nor did he introduce anything quite unknown. On the contrary, it can be shown that his precepts are most frequently taken word for word from St. Basil, whom he calls father, from Cassian, or from others. The style of Benedict's Rule is, however, very different from that of either Basil or Cassian. Benedict's is a code of laws, of which the enactments are so terse and methodical, that they seem put together at one stroke, whereas the others

[1] That the Saint did not wish to create anything new with his Rule is made clear in the prologue, as well as in chapters 65 and 73. That it did import into monasticism a fresh element is, however, well shown (against Grützmacher, *Die Bedeutung Benedikts von Nursia und seiner Regel*, Berlin, 1892) by Suitbert Bäumer in the *Liter. Rundschau*, 1893, col. 80; and even better by Beda Adlhoch in the *Studien des Benediktinerordens*, 14 (1893), 628 ff. Cp. SPREITZENHOFER, *Die hist. Voraussetzungen der Regel des hl. Benedikt*, Wien, 1895 (*Jahresber. des Schottengymnasiums*). Much research has recently been devoted to the text of the Rule, as the editions of Edmund Schmidt, Wölfflin, and Traube testify. According to Traube (*SB. der Bayr. Akad.*, May, 1902) the best MS. is that in the codex of Benedict of Aniane, acquired by the Munich Library from that of Joseph von Görres. Cp. Traube, *Textgesch. der regula S. Benedicti* (*Abh. der Bayr. Akad. 2 Kl.*, 21 (1898), 3, pp. 559-731; cp. WEYMAN, *Hist. Jahrb.*, 1898, p. 726 ff.

present their ordinances more often in the form of pious reflections, or of short apophthegms, without embodying them in a complete Rule or setting up a true monastic constitution.

## The Rule of St. Benedict, and the Popes

369. The sober, moderate spirit of the Benedictine Rule and its strict adherence to tradition made it precious to the Roman Church. One might well say that the whole constitution of the Order was an outcome of the spirit of Christian Rome, nor could the Papacy fail to recognise in the Rule of St. Benedict the traces of its own administrative policy.

This explains why the Popes, beginning with Gregory the Great, gave preference to the Benedictine Rule above all others. On the other hand, it is this Papal support which explains the extraordinary success of the Rule, its immediate adoption, and wide dissemination. If Rome had not, so to speak, taken under its wing the Rule, and those monasteries where it was observed, it is doubtful whether the latter could have exercised such immense power for good. It was to Gregory and his successors that the institute owed its spread and its success in every sphere.[1]

Needless to say, the Founder in drafting his Rule was thinking only of Monte Cassino and of the monasteries which might proceed from it. To produce a general Rule for all the monasteries of the West never entered into his plans. This was a result secured only later, under the guidance of Providence. In his modesty, Benedict laid down for his monastery of Monte Cassino and its possible offshoots the principle of stability; conformably with his vow, whoever, after undergoing the long novitiate, was admitted to a monastery belonged to it for good and all. Benedict made no attempt to combine several monasteries under one administration, though the idea of such a combination was not foreign to his mind. It was the Popes, far more than the Founder, who conceived and carried out the plan of enforcing this Rule generally, and they were led to take this line chiefly because of

[1] Suitbert Bäumer says: "The Popes found in this Rule a spirit in keeping with that of the Roman Church—the same practical legislative character, that wise moderation, that broad-mindedness and comprehensiveness, that recognition of the principle of authority which has always distinguished Rome and the Roman Church. The author [Grützmacher] indirectly grants this by saying (p. 72) that, 'owing to the universal acceptance of the Benedictine Rule, monasticism became imbued with the Roman spirit.'" *Liter. Rundschau*, 1893, col. 80.

the easy application and exceptionally practical character of the Benedictine institutions.

The greatest merit with regard to the extension of the Order belongs to Pope Gregory I., not only on account of the administrative steps he took in favour of these monasteries, but also on account of the biography of the Saint, full of love and admiration, which is contained in the Dialogues. Gregory had been in friendly intercourse with personal disciples of St. Benedict. His statements are derived from the Founder's successors in office at Monte Cassino. the Abbots Constantine and Simplicius, from Valentinian, Abbot of the Benedictine Monastery near the Lateran in Rome, and from Honoratus, Abbot of Subiaco. Hence his accounts are characterised by much local and personal colour. One instance is his allusion to the Roman subdeacon Florentius, who is mentioned as a still surviving grandson of Florentius the priest, the prime mover in the persecution which drove Benedict from Subiaco, a sad family reminiscence for the subdeacon.[1]

Gregory's narrative is certainly overstocked with miracles. A number of quite extraordinary events, which are related as matters of everyday occurrence, may be founded upon false traditions or exaggerations of contemporaries and disciples, dominated by Benedict's personality. Such stories could, however, scarcely have arisen save in the case of a man of wonderful power who was generally accredited with the gift of working miracles. The case is the same with St. Benedict as with St. Martin of Tours and other great saints and missioners. To cast doubt on their miracles one and all would be contrary to sound historical criticism.

Nor are miraculous tales by any means the main subject of Gregory's life of St. Benedict. Its chief subject-matter is the great man's character. We there see Benedict in all his individuality ; we realise his wonderful generosity and zeal for holiness, an ardour which he nevertheless knew how to temper with wisdom and gentleness in his dealings with others, so as not to repel them ; we feel also the severity of the lawgiver—which the sacred art of the Middle Ages typified by a rod—though amidst it all we feel the love and affection of the father. This portrait of the Saint is too true to nature, and completes too well what

[1] Gregory says of his informants (*Dial.*, lib. 2, Praef.) : "*Pauca quae narro, quattuor discipulis illius referentibus agnovi,*" &c. Florentius, ibid., c. 8.

the Rule leaves unsaid to have been all a product of Gregory's fancy.

370. Supported by the authority of the Roman See, and furthered by this attractive biography, written by a Pope of Gregory's high standing, the Benedictine Order quickly made its way among the nations in Christendom.

Mabillon, the historian of the Order, describes it as having been in the seventh century already in a golden age. The monasteries of this Rule in England, even then, vied with those of Italy and Spain. From the eighth century till the foundation of the mendicant orders in the thirteenth, the Rule of St. Benedict was observed almost without exception in all monasteries throughout the West. So rapid was its progress in the beginning that legend soon seized upon the phenomenon, for instance, making of St. Maurus, the founder's spiritual son, an active promoter of the Order in Gaul, for which, however, no authentic documents can be quoted.

In Italy at the time of St. Benedict the yearning of society for monasticism was quite remarkable. The downfall of Roman institutions, civil and social, in the West led people to expect a universal catastrophe. To this was added the moral effect of the long and horrible war between the Ostrogoths and Byzantines. Many turned away in weariness and disgust from a world which Gregory, in his writings and sermons, so often describes, agreeably with the feeling of the day, as "perishing." They sought shelter in the cloisters, hoping to find better things there.

There can be no doubt that it was not from earthly considerations that the majority betook themselves to the rough and simple monastic cell, but because they were moved by the Spirit of God, which haunted the troubled world. It was the will of Providence that the people should recollect themselves, and also that missionary centres should be created for the new nations, to the improvement of their rugged character. Nothing exercised such fascination over these still unconverted sons of nature as the shining example of a man of heaven, especially when his teaching was supported by the power of miracles.

There were, however, others who took the Religious habit from less worthy motives ; they had been disillusioned, or overcome by their bitter experience of the world, or they came in

hopes of finding safety and shelter. Such disciples, incautiously admitted, were often a source of internal strife. As sober historians, we may well think that many a monastery had much to do to inspire such torpid members with some sort of religious energy. Nevertheless, had not by far the greater number of the monks who prayed and worked entered with a true vocation and with a right heart, the monastic institution would never have thriven as it did for so many ages.

Bernard of Clairvaux, that saintly abbot, later on in the Middle Ages, casting a glance back on the results monasticism since its origin had achieved in its followers, exclaims in astonishment: "Christ spoke wonderful words when He said, 'Every one that hath left house, or brethren, or lands to follow me, shall receive an hundredfold and shall possess life everlasting.' These words have everywhere led men to despise this world and to choose voluntary poverty; they have filled the abbeys with monks and the deserts with hermits; they have spoiled the Egyptians and decked the sanctuaries with their best possessions; they were living and powerful words which kindled souls with zeal for holiness and with the hope of a reward, sure and everlasting."

## CHAPTER III

### POPE VIGILIUS IN CONSTANTINOPLE, AND THE EMPEROR JUSTINIAN

### Vigilius at Court

371. Amid the storms excited by the struggles of nations, the West was quietly preparing for the future, and, among the factors which were to be most beneficial for mediæval civilisation, monasticism, of which we have just seen the inception, holds the highest place. In the East, on the contrary, though Justinian, by dint of able policy and good generalship, was increasing his temporal prestige, the fruitless theological controversies over the Three Chapters occupied the forefront of interest.

We left Pope Vigilius on his unwilling journey to Constantinople. He reached his destination in mid-winter, at the end of 546 or beginning of 547.

The Emperor Justinian was anxious to conceal from the Bishops, especially from those of the West, the moral coercion that had been exercised against Peter's successor by his forcible removal from Rome.

During his journey Vigilius had received many complaints from various parts of the West against Justinian's high-handedness in the matter of the Three Chapters, and this resentment strengthened him in his intention not to accept the Emperor's ruling.

Probably from considerations of prudence, the Emperor had prepared a brilliant reception for the Pope; he himself went to meet the Church's Head, and the two embraced each other with tears, after which the populace, singing psalms, marched before the Pope on the way to St. Sophia; everywhere he was met with the cry, "See, the ruler has come, the Lord." When the reception was over, the guest took up his quarters in the Palace of Placidia, which was the official residence of the Papal Nuncio in New Rome.

The first interviews between Vigilius and Justinian bore on the distress of Rome and Italy. Procopius tells us that Vigilius ceased not to urge the Emperor to make every exertion to re-incorporate Italy in the Empire. To this end he used as his intermediaries certain noble "Italici" who were living in the Greek capital. He was more especially supported by Cethegus, a patrician and man of consular dignity, who had journeyed from Italy on purpose to seek assistance. "The Emperor," continues Procopius, describing the whole episode with astounding accuracy, "indeed promised not to forget Italy; but his whole attention was devoted to the doctrines of Christianity, and he was busy with the settlement of controverted points of theology. That is how matters stood in Byzantium."[1]

Such was indeed the case, and the Pope, because he persisted in his refusal to ratify the Imperial Edict, had to suffer persecution at the hands both of the Court and of the Greek Episcopate.

Justinian displayed all the courtesy and all the brutality he was so well able to combine. When Vigilius found himself separated from his attendants and acquaintance, and treated like a prisoner, he exclaimed: "Though you may be able to hold me prisoner, Blessed Peter the Apostle you cannot imprison."[2]

At last, however, the Pope's resistance was overcome, and he yielded to the pressure brought to bear on him. His giving way was first of all a consequence of his weak character, but it was also due to his fear lest a schism should break out, seeing that the Emperor was supported by the whole of the Greek Episcopate. In doing what he did he clung to the hope of overcoming Western opposition and dispersing the prejudices which existed there.

It would almost seem that the Empress had a finger in the business; woman-like, she was anxious to have at last the satisfaction of curbing a Pope who had not chosen to respond to her former advances.

372. There was no question, as we know, of making any compromise with heresy. Vigilius, like the Emperor, could condemn the Three Chapters without any deviation from the Faith.

[1] PROCOP., 3, c. 35.

[2] "*Etsi me captivum tenetis, beatum Petrum apostolum captivum facere non potestis.*" *Epist. clericorum Italiae ad legatos Francorum; P.L.*, LXIX., 116. Cp. DUCHESNE, *Revue des questions hist.*, 1884, 2, 404, 406; *Vigile sur la voie douloureuse.* This article points out, among other things, how many erroneous and confusing statements concerning Vigilius are contained in the account of the *Liber pontificalis.*

We have previously observed that Justinian's Edict against the Chapters, which was the cause of the whole dispute, in no way impaired the Church's doctrine; on the contrary, it had been issued from an excess of zeal in favour of the Faith. To be orthodox was the Emperor's great ambition, and a point on which he was even inclined to be sensitive.

But was such protection by edict required for the Faith? Was it even useful and not rather injudicious, as actually tending to foment confusion and even schism? That was the question regarding which different opinions prevailed. The censured writings of Bishop Theodoret and the theological letter of the so-called Ibas, *i.e.* two of the "Chapters" assailed by Justinian, had been already sufficiently stigmatised, though indeed only indirectly, by the condemnation of Nestorianism. Why then proceed against them again? Also the third "Chapter," the works and the person of Theodore of Mopsuestia, had long been disapproved of by all right-minded people. Moreover, Theodore, the real father of Nestorianism, like Theodoret and Ibas, had long since quitted this world. Why, then, one might ask, re-animate his ghost and again bring him up for trial?

Justinian and his Court theologians argued: "We must stamp out the Chapters, for they furnish a refuge to the Nestorians. Such was the argument of Theodore Ascidas, the Bishop, who had first proposed the measure, and of Menas, the weak Byzantine Patriarch, who most willingly staked the whole authority of his see upon the Imperial edict.

The opposite party, consisting of the Latins, and for a while supported by the Pope, declared, on the contrary, that the condemnation of the Three Chapters lowered the dignity of the Council of Chalcedon, which had seen no reason to take any action against the Chapters, and had even recognised Theodoret and Ibas, as soon as both had protested their orthodoxy. Moreover, on the Latin side, it was also pointed out that the Emperor, as temporal ruler, had no right to issue edicts on Church matters, such as that against the Chapters; such opponents saw well the danger there was in the servile deference of the Greek Bishops to such edicts of the Court.

Such was the reasoning, for instance, of Dacius, Archbishop of Milan, then residing at Constantinople, who assailed the edict in the name of the North Italian Bishops; of Facundus of

Hermiane, the learned and impassioned spokesman of the African Episcopate; of his countrymen, Bishop Pontian, and of Ferrandus, the Carthaginian deacon. In their attacks they, however, sometimes went too far, and ascribed to the decriers of the Chapters views and doctrines which they did not hold.

373. Vigilius, faltering in his opposition to the Emperor, contented himself with the assurance that, in spite of all, the rights and privileges of the Roman Primacy were formally secured. Above all, the decision was to emanate from him; as a matter of fact, the assembly which he now held with the Bishops staying in the Imperial City took the form of an independent Papal Court of Justice for settling the question raised. It resulted in the Pope rejecting the Three Chapters by the "Judicatum" (April 11, 548), a perfectly orthodox document, in which the decisions of the four previous General Councils are again reaffirmed.[1]

The publication of this judgment caused a fierce storm, the Latins at Constantinople being loud in their outcry. Even Vigilius's own nephew, Rusticus the deacon, opposed the Pope, and was backed up by Sebastian, another Papal deacon. Vigilius would have done well to have retired in haste from the contentious atmosphere of the Capital. No doubt he wished himself back in Rome; but there Pelagius, the powerful deacon, was also a dangerous opponent of the Pope's recent step, whilst the city itself was in the grip of Totila, who well knew that the Pope, as the foremost advocate of Roman Imperialism, was working against him at the Byzantine Court. The situation was indeed a difficult one.

Almost worse than anything the Goths could have done were the steps taken by the Pope's theological adversaries. They calumniated him; declared him guilty of treason against the Council of Chalcedon; the Bishops of Illyricum, Dalmatia, and Africa withdrew from his communion.

The Pope, startled and bewildered by the confusion, resolved on the holding of a General Council. But Constantinople was clearly not the place for this, and the plan never got beyond the

[1] The "Judicatum" is only known from fragments, MANSI, 9, 104, 105, 181; JAFFÉ-KALTENBR., n. 922; these, however, suffice to justify Duchesne's opinion, loc. cit. 406: "Les réserves étaient si claires et si précises, que nul monophysite n'aurait pu les signer sans faire ainsi une abjuration complète." Against Cardinal Pitra's doubts as to its authenticity, see GRISAR, *Anal. rom.*, 1, 56 ff.

preliminary steps, thanks to Justinian's cunning and the decrees of banishment which he issued against the dissenting Bishops. Vigilius demanded the return of his "Judicatum" from the Emperor, and received it back after many requests. For this, however, Justinian avenged himself by issuing, in 551, a fresh edict against the Chapters, a proceeding which only embittered the controversy.

Vigilius now threatened to excommunicate the Bishops who were assembled with him in the Palace of Placidia, and who were mostly Greeks, should they sign the Emperor's new edict. They were, however, prevailed upon by Theodore Ascidas and the Court to disregard him, and took the Emperor's side. No one could foresee how the conflict would end.

It would seem like a punishment for his usurpation of the See of Rome, that Vigilius found himself entangled in such difficulties and ill-feeling; he was, however, to pay still more dearly for ousting Pope Silverius.

374. As soon as Justinian saw that Vigilius was becoming inclined to make advances to the Western party, and was determined at any price to assert the independence of the Church, he sought to place him in safe custody. Vigilius accordingly, with his clergy and Dacius of Milan, sought refuge in the church of St. Peter *in Hormisda*. From this place of sanctuary he launched an excommunication against Theodore Ascidas and his adherents. The Prætor of the City guards promptly appeared on the scene with armed troops sent by the Emperor, under orders to remove Vigilius and his companions by force from the church. In their straits the Pope and Dacius clung to the altar, while the clergy closed around to protect them. First the clergy and then Dacius were wrenched away. Then hands were laid on the Successor of Peter, and an attempt made to drag him away by his feet and head, but so firmly did Vigilius hold to the pillars of the holy altar, that, in the struggle, it was overturned, the Pope escaping injury only through the prompt help of the bystanders.

Meanwhile, the Pope's friends had forced their way into the church, and, on seeing the treatment meted out to the revered Universal Bishop, they raised the cry of revolt. At last the soldiery, becoming alarmed at their threats, desisted, and escaped from the desecrated building, pursued by the crowd. Not until they had

received a safe-conduct would the Pope and the Bishop quit the sanctuary.

In the Palace of Placidia, however, the Emperor and his abettors again assailed the Pope, so that he was at last forced to resolve on a flight from Constantinople.

One night, two days before Christmas 551, and therefore in the midst of winter, he let himself down by a rope from a window of the house in which he was guarded, on to a wall which was being built, clambered over the stones at the risk of his life, and, passing through a postern where there was no sentinel, reached the sea. There friends were awaiting him with a boat, in which he was quietly rowed across the Bosphorus to Chalcedon, the memorable city of the Council, and in the same church where the Fathers had held their meetings, at the tomb of St. Euphemia, the terrified Pope, the Bishop of Milan, and other faithful followers sought a haven of refuge.

This step made the position of Justinian one of great awkwardness. How could he, the orthodox Emperor, lay himself open before the whole Christian world, to the charge of having driven away the Supreme Pontiff as a fugitive, especially to a spot like Chalcedon? Did not the deed seem to brand the Emperor as an opponent of the Council once held there, and to put him in the position of a real persecutor of the Church? The exclamation which the *Liber pontificalis* puts on Vigilius's lips, only expressed the view of all the Faithful who heard of these events: "In Justinian I found, not a gracious sovereign, but a Diocletian."[1]

Justinian asked himself whether he should drag the Pope from his refuge. His embarrassment became still greater when Vigilius, owing to his sufferings and fatigue, fell ill, and sent a pathetic circular-letter to the whole of Christendom. In this the Supreme Head of the Church related what had occurred, professing his unswerving adherence to the Faith, and setting forth his claims.

The circumstances of the persecuted Pope could not fail to excite reverence. Affliction and public violence had inspired him with strength. Under similar conditions, other heirs of

[1] *Liber pont.*, I, 298, n. 106: "*Ut video, non me fecerunt venire ad se Iustinianus et Theodora piissimi principes; sed hodie scio, quod Diocletianum et Eleutheriam* [*sic*] *inveni. Facite ut vultis: digna enim factis recipio.*" Edit. MOMMSEN, p. 152.

Peter's plenary power, who also had their hours of weakness, displayed equal courage.

Even his enemies were now ready to submit, and those Greek Bishops who had been excommunicated sent letters making offerings of peace. Justinian himself, with the utmost kindness, besought the Pope to return, offering him a safe-conduct. The personal intervention of Belisarius, the friend and quondam all-too-ready patron of Vigilius, was, however, needed before the Pope would quit Chalcedon.

After his return, the idea of a General Council was again taken up, and Vigilius worked energetically that the Western Church might be suitably represented. It was his aim to conciliate the West and terminate the schism. He wished to set aside the question of the Chapters, and, in spite of the Emperor, to involve in oblivion the troublesome points in dispute. This would, indeed, have been the best course from the first, as the question was one which should never have been raised. But that it must at last be firmly suppressed was strongly urged on the Pope by Pelagius, the bold and far-seeing deacon of Rome. After having worked well for the Roman Church and the afflicted City, he had now come to Constantinople, which he knew well, having formerly occupied the position of Papal Apocrisiary.

The sharp eyes of Pelagius soon perceived that the Emperor was exerting all his might to render impossible a genuine Œcumenical Council.

375. Bishops to the number of 151, all from the East, save six Africans, were already in session as a General Council, when, at the pressing advice of Pelagius, the much-tried and ever-wavering Vigilius decided to enter the lists against it. Then was seen the extraordinary episode of an Imperial, so-called Œcumenical, Council being held, while in the same city St. Peter's Successor refused to take part in it. Vigilius let it be known that he would publish a special decision, agreeably with the importance of his position. The assembly of Bishops formulated a decree, which, as might have been foreseen, agreed with the Emperor's views, and condemned the Three Chapters. The Pope, on the contrary, now issued his definition, taking in it a line opposed to the Emperor's; this was the

so-called Constitutum. The document appears to have been previously sent by him to the assembly, while it was still sitting, but to have been kept back by Justinian. It forbade the condemnation of the Three Chapters, and the detailed exposition, accompanying the prohibition, is excellent. A series of erroneous doctrines, extracted from the writings of Theodore of Mopsuestia, is refuted with good proofs.[1]

Justinian replied to the "Constitutum" by causing the Bishops assembled to erase the name of the Pope from the diptychs, declaring, meanwhile, that no intention existed of severing intercourse with the Apostolic See. This took place while the Council was yet in session.[2]

After its close the Emperor banished the few Latins of the opposition on whom he could lay hands, and followed up his victory by promises and presents. He doubtless also approached Vigilius, either with threats or by gentler means. Unfortunately, we are not informed as to the details of the Pope's conduct, but it is certain that he, at last, in 553, submitted to the Emperor. The advice of Pelagius the deacon was unavailing to induce him to maintain the position he had taken in the "Constitutum."[3]

The Christian world learnt with dismay that Vigilius had altered his mind a third time.

Such changeableness was scarcely calculated to raise the dignity of his See. It was, indeed, a wound of which the results were to remain. We must not, however, forget that the Pope was ill and suffering agony from stone, that he had been finally separated even from his friends, and was affrighted by the fate of his exiled supporters.

[1] The "Constitutum" of May 14, 553, in MANSI, 9, 61; *P.L.*, LXIX., 67, and recently in the edition of the *Collectio Avellana* (pars 1, 1895) by O. GÜNTHER in the *Corpus Script. eccles. Vindob.*, p. 230. Garnier says of the "Constitutum" (*De libris Theodoreti* [*Theodoreti Opera*, ed. SCHULTZE, 5, 555]): "*mirabili quadam ratione compositum, ut nihil sexto saeculo melius et forte par editum reperiatur.*"

[2] MANSI, 9, 367. The Emperor says: "*Unitatem vero ad apostolicam sedem et nos servamus et certum est quod et vos custodietis.*" The Bishops reply: "*Servemus itaque unitatem ad apostolicam sacrosanctae ecclesiae sedem antiquioris Romae, omnia secundum tenorem lectorum apicum peragentes.*" The feeling of unity and of the need of cohesion with the Head was evidently dominant, even at such a crisis. The authenticity of the documents which speak of the erasure of the Pope's name from the diptychs has been questioned by many. Cp., however, HEFELE, *Conciliengesch.*, 2, 887 ff.; HERGENRÖTHER, *Hdb. der KG.*, 1, p. 503, note, and *Photius*, 1, 172; DUCHESNE, *Rev. des quest. hist.*, 1884, II., p. 420.

[3] The Pope's announcement of his altered view, in MANSI, 9, 413, 457; *P.L.*, LXIX., 122, 143 (December 8, 553, and February 23, 554).

Justinian, on the other hand, his bitter oppressor, not only had on his side all the Greek Bishops, but had also again asserted his power in Italy. The valiant Narses had subdued Rome for him, and the Gothic domination was now a thing of the past. Now that Rome was again in his power, what was there to prevent the Emperor from setting up a new Pope whose views agreed with his own? This thought also may well have disturbed Vigilius, and have been the last drop which caused his cup to overflow; in his anxiety to return to Rome he was now ready to do anything.

We still have the last long letter from him, which lacks only the address, in which he accepts the Imperial edict and condemns the Three Chapters. The scribes who were responsible for the drafting of this document were at pains to insert in it a detailed confutation of the arguments previously adduced in support of the Chapters. At a later period it was made clear that this assent to the decision issued by the Emperor and the assembled Bishops did, in the end, pave a way to agreement, and at least served to unite the whole East.[1]

376. Now that the Sovereign had gained his end, Vigilius was allowed to return in the sunshine of Imperial favour. As a mark of regard he took back with him something valuable for Italy, for the City of Rome, and in a certain sense even for the Papacy. This was the promise of a Pragmatic Sanction, or Imperial law, regulating Italian affairs. Such an ordinance was promulgated at Constantinople on August 13, 554, a few months after the drawing up of the Papal document just spoken of, at the beginning of which we find it stated that it had been granted at the request of Vigilius. What we now possess of the Sanction is not the original law, but a collection of statutes by which was modified and improved the great law which heralded a brighter day for Italy.[2]

It seems to have been in the spring, 555, that Vigilius

[1] See the second references in the previous note, in JAFFÉ-KALTENBR., n. 937. On the whole matter, see DIEHL, *Justinien* (1901), pp. 356–362.

[2] The so-called Pragmatic Sanction (in the Novellae of Justinian, ed. C. E. ZACHARIAE VON LINGENTHAL, Lipsiae, 1881, 2, 354–366) begins: "*Pro petitione Vigilii venerabilis antiquioris Romae episcopi quaedam disponenda esse censuimus*," &c. At the end stands the formula: "*Pragmatica data idibus Augusti . . . Narsi viro ill. praeposito sacri cubiculi, Antiocho viro magnifico praefecto per Italiam.*" Cp. HARTMANN, *Untersuchungen zur Gesch. der byzant. Verwaltung in Italien seit 540*, p. 6, and also his *Gesch. Italiens im MA.*, 1, 356 ff.

set out on his homeward voyage. On arriving at Syracuse, however, he felt too weak to proceed, and there, on June 7, 555, he breathed his last.

At last, after ten years' absence, his lifeless body was brought back to Rome and buried on the Salarian Way, in the memorial church built by Pope Silvester above the cemetery of Priscilla. He had done much to restore the Salarian Catacombs, where the ravages of the Goths had been severely felt. The memory of this work perhaps explains why he was buried there, and not with his predecessors in the portico of St. Peter's. He is the first in the list of Popes who, so far as we know, at no time, then or later, was ever the recipient of saintly honours.

# CHAPTER IV

## POPE PELAGIUS I. AND ROME AFTER THE THREE-CHAPTERS CONTROVERSY AND THE GOTHIC WAR

### Pelagius I. and the Friends of the Three Chapters

377. A Roman inscription extols a certain Roman presbyter Mareas as the person best fitted to succeed to the Apostolic See. This inscription, unfortunately, is a mere poem adorning his tomb, for the worthy priest in question died before the end of August 555.

From this epitaph, which is embedded in the wall of the Atrium of Sta. Maria in Trastevere, we gather that Mareas had represented the Pope during the last years of Vigilius's absence. He was much beloved on account of his integrity and charity; he had given his all to the poor; he was also, so it seems, a champion of the Faith and of the Council of Chalcedon in particular. Moreover, according to the laconic text, he had been called upon to maintain the traditions of the Church regarding the non-reiteration of confirmation. The letters on the tombstone are difficult to decipher, as it once formed part of the pavement, and thus was worn away. De Rossi has, however, supplied what is missing with the aid of early copies taken from the slab when it was still in good preservation.[1]

Mareas having been called away by pitiless death, there remained another Roman at Constantinople who, in the eyes of Justinian, seemed fit to succeed. This was Pelagius the deacon, a cleric most respected on account of his qualities and no less for his high birth, who had long been on good terms with the Emperor.

Just now, and for some time past, he had, however, been in disgrace at Court; in fact, on account of his opposition to the Imperial Council, he had been put under lock and key in one of

[1] "DIGNE T*enes premium, Marea, pro nomine Christi* | . . . TV FVERAS ME*ritus pontificale decus*," &c. De Rossi, *Bull. arch. crist.*, 1869, p. 19 ff.; *Inscr. christ. urbis Romae*, 2, 1, pp. 83, 117. Duchesne, *Liber pont.*, 1, 302.

the monasteries of the city, where he was kept so secluded as not even to have access to books. Even this confinement did not prevent the fiery controversialist from continuing to defend his point of view with the pen, nor from branding the condemnation of the Three Chapters as a mistake and a fatal misfortune. Nor did he stop there. Because Pope Vigilius had finally acquiesced in the judgment of the Council, he pitilessly assailed him, depicting him in the guise of an irresolute old man, at the mercy of his satellites, *i.e.* of the clergy surrounding him; he accused him of unreliability and of prostituting his office for money. Towards the end of 554 or beginning of 555, he even wrote a new work, in six books, against the opponents of the Chapters.[1]

It may be that, on receiving news of the death of Vigilius, he realised that the unfortunate Pope had at least gone to the grave with the knowledge that his last action in withdrawing his veto had, after all, been useful for the peace of the Church and for her consolidation in the East. The maintenance of the Church's unity must outweigh all other considerations. It may be, then, that Pelagius, on coming to himself and reviewing matters, perceived that the course he was so ardently following could lead only to schism and irreparable mischief.

We do not know how his conversion was effected, but at any rate his opinion did undergo a change, and he, too, finally accepted the condemnation of the Three Chapters, thus taking the part of the Council, which was that of all the Greeks and of most of the Latins. It has been said that only the prospect of receiving the Papal dignity could have influenced him so powerfully. This may possibly have been the case, though proof is wanting.

Justinian undertook to promote his election to the Papacy, and Pelagius accordingly went to Rome, where he was received with mixed feelings, as, regarding the Chapters, minds were divided. Unhappily we have no information regarding the election, but we know that Pelagius was consecrated on Easter Sunday, April 16, 556, after the See had been widowed nearly ten months. The consecrating Bishops were John of Perusium and Bonus of Feren-

[1] Pelagius, when Pope, mentions two works which he wrote at that time: "*Refutatorium ad papam Vigilium, quando me dampnare volebat, et sex libros in defensionem capitulorum clausos.*" The latter, unpublished, work, now in the Orleans Library, is mentioned by DUCHESNE, *Bull. crit.*, 5 (1884), 96; *Rev. des quest. hist.*, 1884, II., 425. Cp. S. REITER, *Eine unedirte Schrift des Pelagius*, in *Serta Harteliana*, Wien, 1896, Tempsky.

tinum, the usual Bishops not being present, possibly because their Sees were also vacant. The main support of the new Pope was Narses, the orthodox and zealous General, who then governed Italy in the name of the Emperor.

Under the rule of a man like Justinian the Papal dignity can scarcely have been a very desirable office—at least, not for one who knew the Emperor's character so well as Pelagius. His treatment of Vigilius was too notorious. In such a city as Rome, torn by factions, it was much more inviting to be a wealthy and influential deacon than to be Pope and to have the duty of struggling against a dogmatic and overbearing Emperor, whom recent triumph had rendered even more tyrannical. This is why we think the contention questionable that mere ambition induced Pelagius to alter his opinion regarding the Three Chapters. It is true that, having become Pope, he laboured to make the judgment of the Synod of Constantinople accepted. He honestly strove to remove the prejudices existing in the West against the Synod and the Emperor and in favour of the Chapters. His position as Pope was, however, rendered exceedingly difficult, owing to the passion he had at one time displayed in defence of the Chapters.

378. His foes cast his own writings in the face of the new Pope, they dragged to light the hard things he had said of Vigilius, and made his ministration in many ways as troublesome and difficult as his predecessor's. His sole consolation was to be able to state quite truthfully that he had at least been consistent in his firm hold on the doctrines of Faith.

The doctrines of Theodore of Mopsuestia he had indirectly, but clearly enough, condemned in the "Constitutum" of 553, which was largely his work. As for the two others, Ibas and Theodoret, he did them no injury any more than Vigilius, in anathematising certain writings of theirs, which they themselves had rightly retracted at Chalcedon. It was therefore wrong to argue, as did the Western advocates of the Chapters, that a blow had been struck at the authority of the Council of Chalcedon. Under the then circumstances, peace and orthodoxy were best to be served by increasing the importance of the last Council—that, namely, held at Constantinople in 553.

In process of time this Council, when the details of its history

had faded out of mind, came to be numbered with the first four Œcumenical Councils. In 590, it is true, Gregory the Great mentions only the first four as Œcumenical, though he professes an equal reverence for the fifth (*i.e.* of Constantinople), condemning all it had condemned; all these Councils were in force by universal consent.[1]

That the decision of Constantinople came to obtain such authority was evidently not to be ascribed to the character of the assembly, for neither the attendance nor the intrinsic importance of the gathering was such as to render it Œcumenical. Its authority throughout the Church was due rather to the subsequent acceptance by Vigilius and Pelagius of the judgment it had pronounced. After having been stamped with approval by the Holy See, the Synod, little by little, won recognition throughout the Christian world.

Yet, in the West, there was no lack of opposition against the validity of its sentence, and the schisms which had been so much feared actually broke out here, or, at least, were escaped only with difficulty. Such was the case in Northern Africa, in Illyricum, and in the North Italian provinces.

Thanks to the pressure of the Imperial Government and the persuasive arts of those who favoured the Council, the assent of Africa and Illyricum was obtained at no great cost. In Italy, however, and especially in the dioceses of Milan and Aquileia, and likewise in Dalmatia, a stubborn and schismatic opposition was maintained.

As already hinted, Pelagius had also to face resistance in Rome, and, to overcome it, was forced to employ extraordinary and, for the Papacy, unprecedented means. Such was the profession of Faith which he made at his consecration. In this he declared his entire acceptance of the four Councils, particularly of that of Chalcedon; of any fifth "Œcumenical" Council he here says nothing. Further, he declared his adherence to the doctrines laid down in the writings of his predecessors, Celestine, Xystus, and Leo the Great, down to John II. and Agapetus; those whom they recognised as orthodox he, too, acknowledges as such, particularly "the venerable Bishops Ibas and Theodoret." Of

[1] *Ep.* 1, 24, p. 36 (ed. Maur., 1, 25); JAFFÉ-EWALD, n. 1092: Pelagius I. terms the fifth Council "*universalis synodus.*" *Ep. ad Narsetem patricium. Coll. britann.* in the *Neues Archiv*, 5 (1880), 555; JAFFÉ-KALTENBR., 1019. He also gives it the name of "*generale concilium.*" *Neues Archiv*, 5, 536; *Mon. Germ. hist., Epist.*, 3, 442.

Vigilius and the decree of Constantinople he prudently refrained from speaking.[1]

As, however, the monks and many of the more educated and better-class Faithful persisted in holding themselves aloof from him, he took advantage of a "station" in the Basilica of St. Pancras to make a fresh pronouncement. The station in this church, then as now, was on Low Sunday: according to custom, the monks, clergy, and many of the people came in procession with the Pope, who acted as celebrant. No doubt both in the procession and in the Martyr's Basilica on the Janiculus there were some significant gaps. Pelagius took counsel with the General, Narses, who was also present, and thereupon, as soon as the service was over, all present proceeded to St. Peter's, singing psalms on the way. There Pelagius, taking the book of the Gospels and a cross, mounted the ambo, and solemnly holding both above his head in the sight of all the people, swore that he was innocent of the betrayal of the Faith, with which he was charged.[2]

On the same occasion, or shortly afterwards, he held with the clergy present a sort of Consistory at the Tomb of St. Peter. He advised a careful and canonical replenishment of the ranks of the Roman clergy, which had been considerably thinned during the prolonged absence of Vigilius and during the ensuing vacancy. At the same time he also proposed a decree for the prevention of simony at the forthcoming ordinations. By such measures in the interest of the Church, and by his solicitude for the city churches, in which he replaced the valuables of which they had been robbed during the war, by dint of prudence and worldly knowledge, he finally rallied all the Romans to his cause and dispersed the last traces of the schism.

What actually did most for the re-establishment of peace was, however, his affectionate care for the poor, his constant endeavours—for which he had been famous even in earlier days—to ameliorate the condition of the inhabitants of Rome.

379. Pelagius was now free to turn his anxious eyes towards those regions of the West which had either dissolved communion with Rome or seemed on the point of doing so. The Bishops of

[1] MANSI, 9, 717; *P.L.*, LXIX., 379; JAFFÉ-KALTENBR., n. 938.
[2] *Liber pont.*, I, 303, *Pelagius I.*, n. 109. Ed. MOMMSEN, p. 155.

Northern Tuscia refused to insert his name in the diptychs. He removed the cause of their objection by sending them a profession of Faith, in which the thorny question of the Three Chapters is not broached, but which seems to have satisfied them. In the archdioceses of Milan and Aquileia obstinate and fanatical schismatics continued to disturb the peace by publicly thwarting the Primate. After fruitlessly endeavouring to reconcile them, Pelagius at last requested the Byzantine authorities to deal with the ringleaders according to the laws of the Empire, and to eject them from their bishoprics.[1]

Throughout Frankish countries also the malcontents diligently circulated his ill-considered earlier writings against the judgment of Constantinople. They urged that credence should be given to the earlier Pelagius rather than to the later. King Childebert, uncertain of his ground, very good-naturedly begged the Pope himself to assure him in writing that he accepted in all things the doctrine of Pope Leo. This Pelagius did, and as suspicions were not thereby allayed he sent the King a fresh and still more elaborate profession of faith, together with a friendly letter, by which he hoped, if possible, to dispose once for all of the aspersions which had been cast on him. Both documents seem to have been intended more for the local Bishops, who had been responsible for the King's inquiry, than for the King himself.[2]

"Matters of Faith," says the Pope to his uneasy questioners, once more without a word of the Council of Constantinople, were "not being discussed in the East; in this respect, thanks be to God, the Church ever since the death of the Empress Theodora has nothing more to fear there. There have been, however, lively discussions concerning some Chapters lying quite outside the Faith. It would take too long," he continues, "to explain these matters by letter. We will only add, what should suffice for your tranquillity, that we anathematise all who swerve or have swerved

[1] To the Bishops of Tuscia: MANSI, 9, 716; *P.L.*, LXIX., 397; JAFFÉ-KALTENBR., n. 939. On the use of force against the schismatics, see, *e.g.* the letter to the patrician Valerian, a document which has only recently become known through the British collection of Papal rescripts: *Neues Archiv*, 5 (1880), 561; *Mon. Germ. hist., Epist.*, 3, 445; JAFFÉ-KALTENBR., n. 1038. In this Pelagius demands that schismatics who have thrust themselves into bishoprics be brought before the Emperor ("*legitima utamini potestate*," &c.). The Pope insists that recourse to violent measures is justified in such cases, and quotes St. Augustine to this effect.

[2] MANSI, 9, 722 ff.; *P.L.*, LXIX., 402 ff. The middle portion, which Pagi (in BARONIUS, *an.* 556, n. 7 ff.) proposed to set aside as spurious, cannot be questioned; see DUCHESNE, *Rev. des quest. hist.*, 1884, II., 435.

from the Faith of Pope Leo, solemnly ratified by the Council of Chalcedon, even though they detract from it but to the extent of one word or syllable. . . . Your zeal for the Faith and your love of Unity are too great to be moved by any evil rumours or impertinent documents. Here [in Italy] a few half-educated Bishops, men ignorant of the first elements of Faith, have indeed wandered so far astray as to refuse to listen to reason. They have forgotten how profitable is steadfastness in the Catholic Faith."[1]

Pelagius, with his practised eye, saw how advantageous it was to lay doubts to rest and pacify the separatists by such general assurances. Without trenching on the highly involved and dangerous question of the Three Chapters, he simply declared his position to be that of Leo and of the Fathers of Chalcedon. He also asked no more from the other side than that they should give proof of their union with the Holy See and submission to the Pope, *i.e.* he demanded merely an indirect acceptance of the Council and of its condemnation of the Three Chapters. The suppression of the controversy and the silent acceptance of the decision, manifested by union with Rome, was indeed the best way out of the difficulty. What possible advantage could have accrued either to peace or to truth by once more stirring up the old, and, to Western minds, scarcely intelligible controversies regarding Theodore of Mopsuestia, Ibas, and Theodoret? It was a mercy for all that they were at last safely put to rest. The following Popes, in their efforts to end the schism, rightly kept to this same line of conduct.

In the argument he uses in endeavouring to induce his opponents to submit, Pelagius points out that to the Pope alone were the keys given, and that the Church must be sought for in him; in so many words, he lays it down that the authority of his See includes that of the other Apostolic Sees.[2]

This last emphatic utterance shows in what sense must be

[1] Ibid. He does not fail to allude to the trial he had to endure in Constantinople. Duchesne is, however, not fair to Pelagius in making him ascribe his sufferings to the defenders of the "Constitutum," *i.e.* to the present schismatics of Milan and Aquileia; cp. DUCHESNE, ibid., p. 436.

[2] In a letter recently brought to light in the British collection, Pelagius, writing to a bishop, speaks as follows of the need of communion with the successor of Peter (ed. LÖWENFELD, *Epist. rom. pont.*, p. 15, n. 28): "*Adeone te in summo sacerdotii gradu positum catholicae fefellit veritas matris, ut non statim scismaticum te conspiceres, cum a sedibus apostolicis recessisses? Adeone populis ad praedicandum positus non legeras, super apostolorum principem a Christo Deo nostro ecclesiam esse fundatam, et ita fundatam, ut portae adversus ipsam inferi praevalere non possunt? Quod si legeras,*

understood the occasional appeals of Pelagius and his successors against their adversaries to the agreement of the other Apostolic Sees. They do not lessen thereby, as has been alleged, the decisiveness of their own judgment; they merely enhance their own authority with the dignity attaching to the other honoured Sees in order the more easily to secure the submission of their antagonists.

His former writings against Vigilius, nevertheless, continued to cause the Pope many hours of anxiety. Recently discovered documents show how, in his own circle of friends, he spoke of his past. The so-called British collection of Papal letters, which came to light not long ago, contains a letter from Pelagius to Sapaudus, Archbishop of Arles, which may well be quoted here. He says: "How can the other side blame me for a letter which I wrote after the Council, when I was still in doubt which side to take, and which does not pretend to be a decision but merely to express a doubt? When I wrote it my status (as deacon) was such that, even had I wished to make decisions, I should have been under the obligation of submitting them to the judgment of so many Bishops. . . . Nor are my opponents aware how much it cost me when at last my firm conviction led me to accept the wholesome judgment, and how much I had to suffer then from the other side on account of my previous indiscretion. Ought I then to have hardened myself for ever against the truth because, forsooth, from ignorance for a while I held other views?" [1]

In his difficulty he quotes St. Cyprian's allusion to St. Peter, who, in the dispute at Antioch, had also been led by St. Paul to alter his views. He recalls the harmony now existing among the Bishops throughout the East, Illyricum, and Africa, many of whom had once thought differently; he is now, so he writes, in receipt of Acts of Councils held in Africa and Illyricum, which bear witness that all agree in the judgment pronounced and are

ubinam praeter ipsum esse credebas ecclesiam, in quo uno omnes scilicet apostolicae sedes sunt? *Quibus pariter sicut illi, qui claves acceperat, ligandi solvendique potestas indulta est? Sed idcirco uni primum quod daturus erat, etiam in omnibus dedit, ut secundum beati Cipriani martiris id ipsum exponentis sententiam una esse monstretur ecclesia. Quo ergo tu, carissime iam in Christo, ab ista divisus errabas, vel quam salutis tuae tenebas spem?*"

[1] *Neues Archiv*, 5 (1880), 536; *Mon. Germ. hist., Epist.*, 3, 442. It is worthy of notice that at the beginning of the above-cited text the expression "*generale concilium*" is used of the disputed Council of Constantinople. The "letter" to which reference is made is probably the dedicatory epistle of one of the two works mentioned above on p. 36, note 1.

in unity with the Church. He would, therefore, fain say with Augustine, of the alteration in his opinion: "I would rather blame myself, than, at the expense of truth, stick to what I have once said." Just as his Retractations did honour to Augustine, so he (Pelagius) saw no disgrace in his. The newly discovered texts thus show the history of Pelagius in a different and more favourable light than that in which some had been disposed to regard it. Pelagius extricated himself quite honourably from his awkward predicament, and his acceptance as Pope of the decree of Constantinople was certainly no mere act of hypocrisy.

380. The Pope frequently had recourse to Sapaudus concerning church affairs in Gaul. He advanced him to the rank of Apostolic Vicar for the kingdom of Childebert, a post which was in keeping with privileges attaching to the See of Arles. Through Sapaudus he also sought to influence the King's attitude towards the Church and to remove certain abuses prevalent among the Franks. In an encyclical addressed to the Bishops, he urged them to keep to the laws of the Church, which forbid the too rapid promotion of clerics; a case had occurred there of a layman receiving every order, episcopal consecration included, on a single day. Pelagius also dealt severely with certain relics of Paganism remaining in those regions.[1]

If intercourse between the Frankish countries and Rome was less frequent than of yore, this was because it was hindered by political circumstances. Constant warfare made communication difficult between the various countries, and everywhere hampered church government.

## Italy and Rome after the Gothic War

381. Many pages of the correspondence of Pelagius with Archbishop Sapaudus of Arles contain vivid reminders of the long Gothic struggle and of the wars which afterward ravaged Italy, and for which the Franks were largely responsible. "Such is Rome's poverty and want," he laments, "that it is painful to behold; people of high rank are reduced to beggary. The estates (of the Roman Church) in Italy are almost all laid waste, or else

[1] See the letter regarding the Apostolic Vicariate of Arles, dated February 3, 557, in *Mon. Germ. hist., Epist.*, 3, 73; *P.L.*, LXIV., 405 ff. Letter concerning irregular ordinations and Pagan remains in Gaul, in *Mon. Germ. hist.*, ibid., 442; JAFFÉ-KALTENBR., 978.

have been lost to us by alienation." As the Holy See held estates in Southern Gaul, of which the steward was Placidus the patrician, the father of Sapaudus, the Pope begged that the revenues therefrom might be exchanged for useful things and sent by a safe way to Rome. For instance, he proposes that with the money clothing should be bought, "white tunics, cowls, or colobia, or whatever else was produced in Provence."[1]

After the fall of the Gothic kingdom innumerable hordes of barbarians from the north had poured into defenceless Italy. They were mostly Alemanni and Franks, under the leadership of Leutharis and Butilin. This was no war, but an inundation, which, in its wild course, destroyed all it could, and carried away whatever had remained over after the fearful struggle between Byzantine and Goth. Pestilence, too, followed close on the heels of these nations in migration.

The plague struck down Leutharis and many of his people as they were returning from Italy in the autumn of 554. Butilin's bands were cut to pieces by Narses in the plains of Capua. Such was the fury of this last encounter with barbarians laden with the spoils of Southern Italy, that few indeed escaped death by the sword or arrow. The historian Agathias even opined that Narses had gained a victory to be compared with those of Marathon and Salamis. We are not told that the City of Rome was actually attacked during this invasion, but we can well understand how the author of the contemporary biographies in the *Liber pontificalis*, writing in Rome, could say of the victory that "all Italy was jubilant over it." Another writer gives expression to the same feeling of gladsome relief as follows: "The patrician Narses has given the country back to the Roman Empire; he has restored the ravaged cities, and, after driving out the Goths, has brought back Italy to her former joy."[2]

It is, however, difficult to perceive what joy there was in merely seeing the bare and desolate plains of Italy once more change owners, without any sure pledge for a better future.

In spite of the safety of the country and of its fresh

[1] *Epp. ad Sapaudum*, MANSI, 9, 724, 727; JAFFÉ-KALTENBR., 943, 947, dated 556 and 557.

[2] *Liber pont.*, 1, 305, *Iohannes III.*, n. 110: "*erat enim tota Italia gaudens.*" *Prosperi Aquit. Continuator Havniensis*, ed. MOMMSEN (*Mon. Germ. hist., Auctt. antiq.*, 9 ad h. an.).

annexation to the Roman Empire, its state remained one of misery. Procopius professes to be unable to estimate the number of human lives which the whole war had cost. He even speaks of millions, though, of course, he exaggerates. Lack of cultivation, an evil from which Italy had suffered even previously, must now have made itself felt even more, and such places as were still inhabited mourned amidst the accumulating ruins. Very many fortified cities and castles, whither the defenceless population had fled for refuge, showed in their walls the experience they had undergone at the hands of the Goths, or the traces of the siege-engines of the Byzantines. The piles of ruins left behind them by both armies throughout the whole country, remained long after to attest to the ferocity of the war.

It was at that period that the Campagna in the neighbourhood of Rome took on that solemn garb of mourning, of which, to this day, it has not divested itself. The whole tract seems still to weep over the downfall of that ancient civilisation which once covered it with life and bloom. Ever since, these hills and plains have lacked settlers, though the Campagna, more than any other region, always required the sturdy hands of colonists in great number. The thin crust of earth spread over volcanic rock or sand, and the unfavourable climate, demanded far more labour here than elsewhere in order to win from the soil the fruits of husbandry. Irrigation, too, now came to an end, for the ancient aqueducts had, almost all, been broken down, and who could think of restoring them amid the universal distress? The water which ceaselessly flowed from them sought out fresh channels for itself, working havoc among the former gardens and pastures, to say nothing of the fever-laden air produced by the stagnant pools.

The population of Rome must by that time have been reduced to exiguous proportions, at least in comparison with the quondam multitude of citizens and patricians who composed the people of the Quirites and the huge crowd of slaves by whom they were served. No other period of stress had ever brought the inhabitants so low in point both of number and of wealth. What irony to see the *Senatus Populusque Romanus* established in stint and shame amidst the still-standing monumental splendours of the whilom mistress of nations. The

Forums and Thermæ, the mansions and porticoes, retained in their neglect their colossal grandeur; but they were now the dwelling of a famished crowd, among which were vast numbers of gentry now reduced to beggary and forced to seek consolation, hope, and even their daily bread, at the deaconries, the basilicas, and the monasteries.

But sparse mention of senatorial families henceforth occurs among the inscriptions of Rome and in historical notices. Numbers of noble families not yet entirely extinct were either with the Court at Constantinople, or living on their ancestral estates in Sicily.

The Roman Senate continued a nominal existence for a little while longer, under the presidency of the *Praefectus urbi;* yet, after 579, it is never once alluded to in historical sources. In that year an embassy went in the name of the "Senate" to seek help at Constantinople; it is very significant that this was, at the same time, an embassy from the Pope. Quite evidently the power of the Senate was gradually being merged in that of the Church.[1]

Agnellus, the writer of the history of the Bishops of Ravenna, looked on the end of the Senate as the consummation of the downfall of the ancient grandeur of Rome. Speaking of the calamity of the Gothic War, he says: "The Senate of the Romans gradually disappeared, and then the freedom of Rome was abolished."[2]

Did we seek a turning-point when ancient life expired in Rome, none better could be found than the second half of the sixth century, with the distress which ensued after the Gothic War. In all the customs and habits of life, both private and public, so profound were the alterations that took place, that Roman civilisation received its death-blow. Moreover, a general political convulsion was impending in Italy through the Lombard invasion. A new world, so to speak, was about to come into being in Italy. The olden civilisation was collapsing; learning and art were face to face with ruin.

[1] The embassy is reported in the fragment of MENANDER PROTECTOR: *Excerpta de legation. ad gentes*, n. 25; *P.G.*, CXIII., 835. On the Senate, see CH. DIEHL, *Études sur l'administration byzantine dans l'exarchat de Ravenne* (568–751), ii. ch. 4, p. 124 ff. HARTMANN, *Byzantinische Verwaltung*, p. 44.

[2] AGNELLUS, *Liber pont. eccl. ravenn., Petrus sen.*, n. 95; ed. HOLDER-EGGER, p. 338.

In this extremity the Bishops and the Popes took the human race under their protection, and in the midst of the flood of barbarism the monasteries became the last shelters for study, homes where strength could be sought for the struggle against the universal decay.

382. In his plaint over the sad fate of the Senate, Agnellus lamented that an end was made of the freedom of Rome. Though Agnellus can scarcely have meant his words to be taken so literally, it is a fact that what the Byzantines set up in place of Gothic rule was no freedom, but rather the reverse.

Byzantine government tended to curtail free individual action and to introduce the system of serfdom. We should not be far from the truth in saying that, on the contrary, true freedom had its home among the Goths. That the Goths had to yield to the Byzantines was not because their political institutions were devoid of freedom and freshness, for in this respect they far excelled the Byzantines. The real reason why their rising kingdom was crushed so promptly was due to the estrangement of the Latin population in Italy. The Goths failed to take any root in the country, and their kingdom remained a warrior-state, composed of aliens. Principally on account of their difference in faith, the natives refused to be on friendly terms with the Goths, and thus it came about that this strong, free nation was isolated and deprived of all support. It was because of their heresy that they fell, and it was a blessing for Italy that Arianism disappeared with them.

Unhappily, however, the advent of the Byzantines brought despotism instead of Arianism, and, in place of an outworn religion, the bureaucracy of a State, already in many respects rotten, became the object of aversion for the Latin population.

In the Byzantine state-system of that day the lead was taken by a few privileged individuals, who ruled everything at the expense of private initiative, and at the same time claimed every benefice for themselves; they enriched themselves and oppressed the weak. Although, under Justinian, law was much studied, the actual administration of justice was often very lax. Nor were legislators successful in making the necessary allowances; for

instance, they failed to adapt their laws to the requirements of the Germanic States conquered by Byzantium.[1]

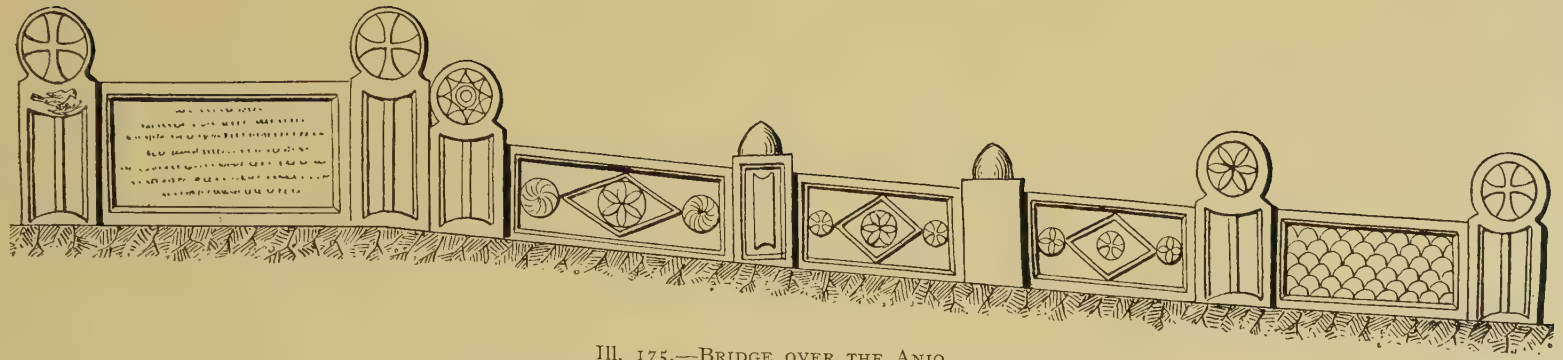
383. In spite of all this some gratifying changes may be noted in Rome and Italy during the reaction which followed the Gothic wars. Many towns were rebuilt, and the roads once again were thrown open to travellers. What is more, the new laws embodied in the Pragmatic Sanction prepared fresh openings for the Church, making it possible for her to help in healing moral, social, and political evils. Finally, in the more exclusive domain of the Church, as we shall see, a cheering progress is observable at head-quarters, affecting even the liturgy.

It was due to the foresight of Narses, the Byzantine commander-in-chief, that in the days of peace many ruined strongholds and castles were again rebuilt. He also restored the walls and gates of Rome, so far as this was necessary. The Greek Cross, which, as already stated, is still visible upon the key-stone of certain Roman gateways (see vol. ii., Ill. 163), also shows that Rome was then reincorporated in an orthodox Empire, whose hope was in the Cross. Beneath this sign of the Cross the ancient City Wall will sustain the shock of the Lombards. Obedient to the Cross, the Byzantine power will rule over the City for yet two hundred years, though its sway will become more and more merely nominal. Only then will its rule pass away when the time comes for it to take the side of the Iconoclasts against the true religion of the Cross.

Such a Greek Cross, as those spoken of above, was also placed upon the bridge over the Anio on the Salarian Way (Ill. 175). This was a fine structure which Narses rebuilt in 565, after it had been destroyed by Totila. The bridge displays this Cross upon the corner pilasters of the parapet. A couple of these stones with their crosses still exist, though the ancient bridge itself has passed away, and been replaced by a new one.[2]

[1] DIEHL, *Administration byzantine*, p. 367 : "Le régime administratif pesait lourdement sur les villes et sur les provinces." HARTMANN, *Byzant. Verwalt.*, p. 3 ff.

[2] See vol. ii. p. 332, note. A sketch in D'AGINCOURT (*Storia dell' arte, Architettura*, Pl. 19) was fortunately made by him before the first partial destruction of the bridge by the Neapolitans in 1798, when retreating before the Republicans. Since 1798 the inscriptions mentioned in the text have lain in the bed of the river. The restored bridge was blown up by the Papal troops in 1866, on the approach of Garibaldi's army. As late as 1870 I saw the ruins myself. Later on it was rebuilt in modern style; the ancient fragments of decoration, except those in the river bed, are still lying about. Our Illustration 175 supplements d'Agincourt's sketch with the help of the remains. For the other notices, cp. NIBBY, *Contorni di Roma*, 2, 593 ff.



Ill. 175.—Bridge over the Anio.

(Partly reconstructed after Mazzanti, *Scultura ornamentale di Roma*, p. 51.)

From old copies we also know the wording of the two Latin inscriptions which Narses set up in the centre of the bridge, on the inner side of either parapet. Both are at present buried in the river-bed, where they live on under the turbulent waters of the Anio, like the brave deeds of Narses in history. One of them, headed by the monogram of Christ ☧, told how Narses "had routed the kings of the Goths with wonderful promptitude, and restored freedom to the City of Rome and the whole of Italy"; and how he had "restored the structure of the bridge destroyed by the tyrant Totila to greater beauty than before." In the inscription he is styled: "*Narses vir gloriosissimus, expraeposito sacri palatii, excons. atque patricius.*"

On the parapet on the opposite side a passer-by could have read the other inscription, a well-turned and, for the period, gracefully composed poem of four distichs. Above the murmuring stream, says the poet, Narses has once more re-established the stone roadway; he who bent the stiff neck of the Goths, also made the mighty river pass under the yoke of the bridge.[1]

## The Pragmatic Sanction for Italy.—Growth in the Influence of the Bishops and Pope

384. The legal re-arrangement which had been introduced into Italy by means of the Pragmatic Sanction might have succeeded even better had it been carried out by those in power. According to what we know of its articles, they first laid it down as a principle that the Imperial code should hold in Italy as elsewhere. Further they enacted, to the advantage of both Church and country, that the election of governors in each province (*provinciarum iudices*) should be conducted by the Bishops and provincial magnates in joint session; also that the Bishop was to

[1] The inscriptions in DE ROSSI, *Inscr. christ.*, 2, 1, 18, n. 1 and 2 (from the *Einsiedlensis*); in the *Corpus inscr. lat.*, VI., n. 1199. The poem begins: "*Quam bene curbati directa est semita pontis. . . . Calcamus rapidas subiecti gurgitis undas,*" &c. Upon the Cestian Tiber bridge in Rome we may see, on the inner side of the parapet, in a similar position, the inscription to Gratian, Valentinian, and Valens, which was formerly repeated opposite, probably in the same words. Monumental reminiscences of Narses are rare. De Rossi writes in the *Bull. arch. crist.* on one of his daughters, and there mentions a fragment of an historical inscription relating to the *Via Salaria*, and which contains Narses's name. Garrucci (*Storia dell' arte*, 6, 74) believes Narses to be represented in military dress, bearing a *Victoria* to the Emperor Justinian on an ivory tablet in the Barberini Museum, which, however, he does not reproduce. He is probably alluding to the figure on the left of our Illustration 178.

have a say in the choice of city officials; likewise that the Bishop and leading citizens were to audit the accounts of officials who retired; that he was to report to the Emperor any ordinary judge who refused to render justice; that he could claim a joint right to try any case when the judge's impartiality had been impugned by either side; finally, that he was to decide between the governor himself and such subjects as might consider they had been wronged by him.

Such enactments meant that the Church received a sort of oversight over the officials of the State.[1]

The State decided on thus including the Church in the system of government, not only out of regard for the actual position, wealth, and property of the bishops who, even previously, had exercised great influence over civil affairs, chiefly owing to the power which came from the landed property conferred on them. The Eastern autocrats were moved by two other considerations; by their consciousness of the great moral weight of the bishops and the social power of religion; by their knowledge of the corruption rampant among the officials, and their certainty that it would be hopeless to dream of extirpating bribery and oppression without the help of some authority guided by loftier principles, and above bureaucratic influence.[2]

We must also remember that the civil and military authorities, owing to the lack of public funds, or to incapable administration, often stood helpless and without resource when cities and whole provinces were in the direst need. In such cases the bishops were wont to intervene. In this wise, in most of the cities, a large part of the administration had, little by little, passed into the hands of the bishops. Among such bishops who thus saw their influence increase, the Bishop of Rome was certainly not the last.

Seeing that the Pragmatic Sanction gave such powers to the bishops, we shall not be surprised to learn that it also acknowledged their right to exercise ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Complaints against clerics and monks were to be tried before the

[1] The best edition of the so-called Pragmatic Sanction (which is, however, not the original law, but a series of decrees designed to supplement it) is by ZACHARIAE VON LINGENTHAL, in his edition of the *Novellae* of Justinian (Lips., 1881; Teubner), 2, 354 ff. Election of the "*provinciarum iudices*," c. 12, p. 359.

[2] HEGEL, *Gesch. der Städteverfassung in Italien*, 1, 138 ff.; MALFATTI, *Imperatori e papi ai tempi della signoria dei Franchi in Italia*, 1, 137 ff.; DIEHL, p. 369 ff.; HARTMANN, p. 50.

bishop. As in the Eastern half of the Empire, the secular arm was ready to execute the sentence of the ecclesiastical courts. The *defensores* of the Roman Church, acting as the standing representatives of the Popes, tried charges against bishops quite independently of the State. At first in criminal cases the clergy could claim ecclesiastical immunity only for trifling offences; in more serious cases, after having been deposed and degraded by the church authorities, they were handed over for punishment to the secular court. But, towards the end of the sixth century, even this intervention of the State ceased, and the Church, acting alone, imposed on the clerical evil-doer a more or less heavy penance accompanied by imprisonment which sometimes lasted for life; it was then laid down as an axiom that secular judges have no competence in matters concerning the Church alone.[1]

Nor were the denizens of the cloisters forgotten in the decrees supplementing the Pragmatic Sanction. The revolutions and sacks had led to the violation of many a vow. Hence a decree which runs: "Consecrated virgins, and all persons of the female sex, who having been vested with the religious habit, have nevertheless been taken in marriage, must again return to their convent, or church, or to the religious situation they formerly held."[2]

385. The new law insured to the City of Rome all her previous privileges and immunities; it also confirmed the existing regulations and grants for the repair of classical buildings, for the Tiber-bed, for the market and harbour of the City, and for the aqueducts. Public distribution of food was to take place as under Theodoric, and as had been provided for by Justinian. Similarly the usual grants were to be made to "grammarians, orators, physicians, and lawyers—so that," as the wording runs, "a well-taught new generation may flourish in the State," and that, in fine, "every one may taste the happiness of our time."[3]

The "eternity" of the Emperor (a classic curial formula in vogue since heathen times) in the "divine" Pragmatic Sanction also gave directions respecting the coinage, and the standard weights and measures. We are informed that the Emperor has given orders to this effect to both the Pope and the Senate, who

[1] HARTMANN, p. 48.
[2] *Novellae*, ed. ZACHARIAE, l. c. c. 17.
[3] For the privileges, ibid., c. 25; the *annona*, c. 22. "*Ut undique nostri temporis possint felicitatem sentire*" (c. 14).

are thus created guardians of the coins, weights, and measures, that thereby nothing may be done to the detriment of the provinces. Other laws of Justinian expressly speak of the Church as the authority appointed to safeguard the legal standards of weight and measure.[1]

These standards were to be kept in the principal church of each town, and to them all weights and measures used in business were to be adjusted, whether they were for civic, military, or Government use. This custom of the Christian Empire tallied with one already existing in heathen times, for, in classical antiquity, the official standard weights and measures were placed under the protection of the temples of the gods. In Rome they were kept in the temple of Capitoline Jove and accredited copies, duly stamped, were held ready in other temples—such as those of the Dioscuri, of Mars Ultor and of Ops—for comparison with the weights and measures in use.[2]

We have many weights of ancient Rome (Ill. 176, 177)[3] frequently of black stone, and usually of circular shape, flattened at the top and bottom. They weigh from ten to a hundred pounds, counting the Roman pound as twelve ounces, or 327.45 grammes. Many of these stone-weights bear the number of pounds chiselled upon them, and still have their handles, or at least the holes into which the handle was fixed with lead; a few even have the hall-mark introduced in 167 by Junius Rusticus.[4]

In the churches of Rome and in other places various weights of this kind are exhibited, the common people accounting them as stones used in the martyrdom of the early Christians (see vol. ii.

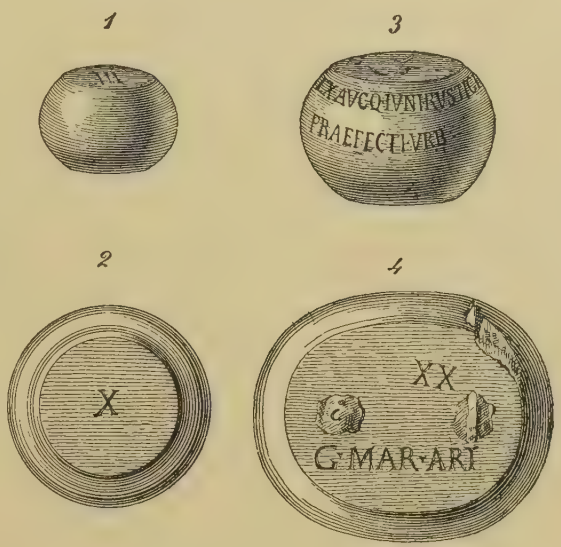
[1] Pragmatic Sanction, c. 19: "*Iubemus in illis mensuris vel ponderibus species vel pecunias dari vel suscipi, quae beatissimo papae vel amplissimo senatui nostra pietas in praesenti contradidit.*" Cp. *Authent. Collat.*, IX., tit. 11, c. 15: "*Praecipimus . . . has mensuras et pondera in sanctissima uniuscuiusque civitatis ecclesia servari, ut secundum ea et gravamen collatorum et fiscalium illatio et militares et aliae expensae fiant.*"

[2] LANCIANI, *Pagan and Christian Rome*, p. 38.

[3] Sketch by Tabanelli. Nos. 1 and 2 show stones preserved in the church of Sta. Maria at Galeria, near Rome. No. 1, a three-pound weight, still shows the number; in No. 2 the figure ten has been added by Tabanelli. Nos. 3 and 4 are from GATTI, *Antichi pesi inscritti del museo capitolino* (*Bull. arch. com.*, 1884, pp. 61 ff., 105 ff., Pl. 6, 7). No. 3, which is also a ten-pound weight, or *decapondium*, bears the inscription: "*Ex auc*[*toritate*] *Q*[*uinti*] *Iuni Rustici praefecti urb*[*i*]." No. 4, a twenty-pound weight, seems according to its inscription to have belonged to G[aius?] Mar[cius?] Art[emas?]. On it may be seen the holes for fixing the handle, the lead having disappeared. In the Capitoline Museum alone there are more than one hundred weights of this sort (GATTI, p. 68). In Sta. Maria in Trastevere, in a hollow in the right aisle, may be seen a collection of various-sized weights, giving an excellent idea of how these stones were kept in the olden basilicas.

[4] DE ROSSI, *Bull. arch. crist.*, 1864, p. 58, on the measures kept at the Capitol, and on one in the Strasburg Library marked with the monogram of Christ.

Ill. 103). It would, of course, not be right to deny that such weights may occasionally have been used for the punishment of Christians; but the reason why so many of these stones have been kept in churches from time immemorial, must rather be sought in the law which once directed their preservation there. They thus acquired a certain dignity, and, in later times, when their origin was forgotten, they became objects of reverence. Especially when many of various sizes are found together, they may well have been preserved without a break since the time of the Old Christian Empire. During the sacks and other misfortunes which the basilicas had to experience, they were far safer than other objects of greater value. Baronius is quite wrong in endeavouring to show that a difference exists between the stones in the present churches and the early weights, inasmuch as the weights were always provided with numbers, whereas those in the churches are not. The fact is that many weights never bore any marks, whilst many of the stones in the churches do in reality display numbers.[1]




Ill. 176–177.—Roman Stone-weights.

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386. Pelagius I. was just the man to use to the best advantage of the Church and country the new legislation of Justinian for Italy. His previous experience, as deacon, in business both ecclesiastical and political qualified him for the attainment of the high aims sought by Papacy and Empire.

[1] Emiliano Sarti, a Roman professor, in his appendix to Dionysius' *Cryptae Vaticanae*, p. 97, speaking of the weights preserved in the crypt of St. Peter (n. 149, p. 6), also disagrees with Baronius: "*pondera ex nigro lapide, quae in excruciandis sanctis martyribus adhibita olim fuisse traditur.*"

His *Regests* indeed afford us an insight into a singularly strenuous life.

A glance at his letters shows us how Pelagius intervened in the regular administration of justice, and, for instance, removed cases in which the clergy or the monasteries were concerned, from the secular tribunals of Italy, and sent them to be tried by his Bishops; how he called in the secular arm against usurping or unruly Bishops, demanding at the same time the presence of a few clerics, in order that "the military may not appear to be acting alone." Again we find him assailing abuses in the monasteries or among the clergy with the ready weapons of spiritual admonition and penance. At other times he backs up the action of his Bishops by the "*defensores* of the Holy See," *i.e.* by experienced lawyers in lower orders who carry out his directions.[1]

In some of this Pope's letters a strong secular element is noticeable. This was called for by the particular risks of the period; especially when it became necessary to put in order the property and revenues of the Roman See, Pelagius displayed a prudence which overlooked nothing.

387. Already, under previous Popes, we find passing allusions to the estates or Patrimonies of St. Peter. The basis of the species of doomsday-book of the Lateran, which still served for the administration of the Patrimonies under Gregory the Great, dated from Gelasius. From the Chancery of Gelasius documents are still preserved which take the reader back to the earliest days of these estates, especially a number of receipts duly handed over in exchange for the revenues. Even then the Patrimonies already extended beyond Italy; for instance, as far as Dalmatia. Gelasius, like Pelagius later, we find complaining that, in consequence of the wars, much of the Patrimonies had been confiscated by the enemy; hence, that less than heretofore could be given for the support of the poor.[2]

That Pelagius, on account of damage done to the Patrimonies in Italy, claimed help from those in Gaul, we have already seen.

[1] Cp. the *Regesta* in JAFFÉ-KALTENBR. in the order of the examples cited: n. 1021, 964, 952, 1024, 1028, 1001, 968, 981.

[2] IOH. DIAC., *Vita s. Gregorii*, 2, c. 24: "*Gelasianus polyptychus.*" The *patrimonium* in Dalmatia is described as "*recula s. Petri inter Dalmatias*" (*Gelas. ep. ad Agilulphum;* MANSI, 8, 141; JAFFÉ-KALTENBR., n. 686). Complaints of Gelasius to "*Firmina, illustris femina,*" in MANSI, 8, 142; JAFFÉ-KALTENBR. n. 685. "*Res pauperum*": MANSI, ibid.; JAFFÉ-KALTENBR., n. 684.

In his anxiety he also turned to Africa, where the Roman Church perhaps even then possessed the estates mentioned under Gregory I. To Boethius, the Pretorian Prefect in Africa, he explains that after twenty-five years of warfare, even then not yet at an end, the Roman Church could reckon only on a scanty income from distant islands and remote countries for the support of its clergy and numerous poor.[1]

Meanwhile matters gradually improved under his painstaking care. In the few documents which have accidentally survived, Pelagius mentions several remittances, for instance, in letters to Maurus, Bishop of Prænestе, and Julian, Bishop of Cingoli. Both were administrators of Roman Patrimonies lying in their districts. Julian had consigned five hundred gold solidi to a banker in Rome named Anastasius, who is here styled *argentarius* and *arcarius* to the Pope.[2]

A certain church notary named Valentine was, however, the principal mainstay of the Pope in his work of economic reform. In this work Pelagius stood in need of such assistance, for the difficulties of his task were increased by the unreliability of the ecclesiastical officials. For instance, the Pope was obliged to despatch a letter of rebuke to a *defensor* named Dulcitius, because he had sent in a statement of accounts previously cooked "after the fashion of the Greeks." So careful was the Pope's management, that we even find a letter of his to Gurdimer, a *comes*, concerning the cultivation of some meadows on the *Via Portuensis*.[3]

All this trouble was rewarded: it was "the property of the poor" that was at stake; and these *res pauperum*, as the estates were called, were rightly so dear to the Pope, that even when the famous Narses himself suggested using them for other persons, Pelagius peremptorily refused his proposal.[4]

388. When Pelagius died on March 4, 561, an affectionate epitaph in the then customary metrical form was placed upon the monument erected by the Romans to his memory in the portico

[1] Pelagius to Boethius: MANSI, 9, 737; JAFFÉ-KALTENBR., n. 963.
[2] To Maurus: MANSI, 9, 736. To Julian: ibid., 737; JAFFÉ-KALTENBR., n. 951, 953.
[3] To Dulcitius: MANSI, ibid. To Gurdimer: *Coll. Brit. Pelagii ep.* 62: "*prata in via portuensi quae Epreiana vocantur.*" JAFFÉ-KALTENBR., n. 949, 1034.
[4] To Narses: "*Bene noverit excellentia vestra, nos habentibus duntaxat hominibus et nullam necessitatem patientibus res dare pauperum nulla ratione praesumere,*" &c. (MANSI, 9, 736. DEUSDEDIT, *Collect. can.*, 3, c. 104, ed. MARTINUCCI, p. 289.)

of St. Peter's. The poetry, indeed, was not of the best, but the verses rightly extolled the deceased for the part he had taken in the revival of Rome and for his efforts to relieve all forms of distress. It tells how he brought many new recruits into God's sanctuary and banished simony; how he ransomed captives, and never withheld from the unfortunate poor the things he had in gift; how he shared the sorrows of all, and made his own the sighs of all and also all their joys.[1]

## Pope John III. (since 561)

389. The choice of the clergy and, no doubt, Byzantine influence raised another noble Roman to the apostolic throne after the death of Pelagius I., himself a nobleman. Rank had now become a desirable thing on account of the secular position of the Papacy. John III., son of Anastasius, a *vir illustris*, was consecrated on July 17, 561. According to Evagrius, he was surnamed Catelinus.[2]

Four and a half months had elapsed between the two pontificates. The delay was probably due to the fact that the Emperor Justinian had reserved to the Crown the right of ratifying the papal elections. Hence, each time, after the election had been concluded in Rome, the clergy had to send an embassy to the Greek capital to crave permission for the consecration of their candidate.

390. In the *Liber pontificalis* this custom is mentioned not long after, for we are there told that, owing to the wars, it was impossible to undertake the embassy to Constantinople, and that the Pope-elect (Pelagius II.) had therefore been consecrated without awaiting the Emperor's "command."[3]

So close, then, was the alliance into which the Roman Church entered, or was forced to enter, with the Roman State, that even the appointment of its head, the Supreme Pontiff of the whole Church, was made dependent upon the consent of the secular power. The Roman Church was also obliged to pay a large sum of money to the Court, agreeably with invariable Byzantine usage,

[1] De Rossi, *Inscr. christ.*, 2, 1, p. 208, after Mallius.
[2] Evagrius, *Hist. eccl.*, V., c. 16.
[3] *Liber pont.*, 1, 309, n. 112: "*absque iussione principis*," ed. Mommsen, p. 160.

in exchange for the act of ratification. This remained the rule for a whole century; for it was not until 684 that the Emperor Constantine Pogonatus renounced the privilege of confirmation in an edict addressed to Benedict II. We may add that this ratification was never taken as a right over the Church inherent in the Emperor. Such was certainly not the case. The Emperor claimed the right as a mere formality when once he had induced, or practically compelled, the Church to allow him this share in the elevation of the Pope, and the Church acquiesced in the claim only in view of the benefit accruing to both Church and State from such a peaceful union of both Powers. In canonical language, she was willing to account the Papal election as yet incomplete and illegal until the Imperial assent had been secured. Not until this assent had been obtained did the candidate complete the election by giving his own consent. The Imperial assent was never refused, and, in reality, it was of no great moment, at least not when the election had been unanimous, though in double elections any ill-will on the Emperor's part could easily have created difficulties.

At any rate, the Roman Church did not consider the situation as either wrong or intolerable. Had it seemed so in her eyes, she would certainly not have lacked the courage frankly and freely to oppose the pretension, just as the earlier Popes who followed Leo the Great—Hilary, Simplicius, Felix III., Gelasius, and Symmachus—heedless of danger, had withstood Byzantium, when it sought to interfere in the rights of the Church and of conscience.

# IV.—ROME UNDER NARSES AND IN THE EARLY PERIOD OF THE EXARCHATE

# CHAPTER I

## THE POPES AND THE GOVERNMENT OF ITALY AND ROME

### A Glance at Events

391. The three Popes who occupied the Roman Chair in the interval between Pelagius I. and Gregory the Great, in spite of Byzantine victories and the hopes founded on them, reigned in a time of great hardship.

**John III.,** who was Pope for nearly thirteen years, saw the advent of the Lombards in Italy (568), and the dawn of a fresh reign of terror. Speaking of the death of **Benedict I.,** a Roman, son of Boniface, who followed John as Pope after an interval of ten months, the *Liber pontificalis* says: "Overwhelmed with troubles and afflictions, Benedict departed this life." Benedict, when he died in 579, had been in office barely four years.[1]

**Pelagius II.,** the son of Winigild, a Goth, was the next to be raised to the uneasy throne of Peter. His choice is a happy sign that the Church of Rome was beginning to overcome the antagonism of nations which so lately had been engaged in a murderous struggle. Pelagius II. was an excellent priest, though not a peer in talent and political gifts to the first bearer of the name. After a pontificate full of afflictions and anxiety, principally owing to the near approach of the Lombards, he was carried off by the terrible pestilence which, in the beginning of 590, ravaged the City and its neighbourhood.[2]

392. To compare this enumeration of the immediate predecessors of Gregory I. with the names of the contemporary monarchs. **Justinian I.,** the conqueror and lawgiver, closed his eyes in death in 565. He was a sovereign of great enterprise, a successful but unscrupulous reviver of the outward power and

[1] *Liber pont.*, I, 308, *Bened. I.*, n. 111. The death of Benedict occurred on July 30. Before this Pope the See was vacant from July 13, 574, to June 2, 575.

[2] *Liber pont.*, I, 309, *Pelagius II.*, n. 112: "*Natione Romanus, de patre Unigildo.*" According to this source his reign lasted ten years two months and ten days, *i.e.* from November 26, 579, to February 7, 590.

splendour of the Empire of East Rome. A contemporary diptych once preserved in Rome (Ill. 178)[1] represents him very characteristically prancing on horseback over the figure of Gæa, *i.e.* over the earth subdued by him, while his devoted servants bring him the tokens of victory, and the conquered nations the tribute of their countries. Above him we see Christ, in youthful form, blessing the Emperor, and holding in His hand the sceptre of Divine Government over the world. To tell the truth, this sceptre in Christ's hand was not always remembered by Justinian, and, in the doctrinal disputes, not infrequently had to yield to the sceptre of the worldly autocrat.

A milder man by far was **Justin II.** We may even feel tempted to rank this cultured, peace-loving, and pious monarch higher than the domineering Justinian with his excessive fondness for outward display. But Justin II. proved weak; he was too old, and showed the faults of an old man in his government; the farsightedness and the kingly character of his predecessor were not his. The next Emperor, **Tiberius,** who came to the throne in 578, had more determination and energy.

Finally, **Mauritius**, who in the year 582 succeeded the latter, was above all a soldier, and displayed many of a ruler's qualities. He spoiled, however, the good he did by petty efforts to enrich the Exchequer by little acts of meanness, and not less by disfavour shown to the free action of certain elements which help to support the State, among which the Church holds the first place.

Partly from piety, partly from policy, the Emperor Mauritius was an admirer of his Court Patriarch, John "the Faster." The latter was trying to increase his own dignity, to some extent at the expense of the Pope of Old Rome, and his action found warm approval and support at the Court of Constantinople. When, however, John the Faster, at a Synod in Constantinople in 588, gave himself the sonorous title of "Œcumenical Patriarch," Pope Pelagius II. raised his voice in protest, and declared the decrees of the Council invalid.[2]

The history of the relations between Popes and Emperors

[1] Cp. DAREMBERG and SAGLIO, *Dict. des antiquités*, 2, 1, p. 275, Pl. 2459. Among other scholars who have seen Justinian in the figure here depicted, we may mention GARRUCCI (*Arte crist.*, 6, p. 74) and STUHLFAUTH (*Altchr. Elfenbeinplastik*, pp. 109, 200). Garrucci opines that the figure to the left shows Narses. This work of art is now in the Paris Louvre.

[2] *Gregorii M. Regist.*, 5, n. 44 (ed. MAUR., 5, n. 13); JAFFÉ-EWALD, n. 1357, 1354; cp. n. 1058.

Ill. 178.—The Emperor Justinian.

(Ivory diptych formerly at the Museo Barberini in Rome. Photo by Morcioni.)

throughout this period is, however, only imperfectly known. Documents which would have thrown light on it are unfortunately missing. The letters of the Papal Chancery, of which some have survived belonging to the time of Pelagius I., furnish no information. One document only has been saved from the long Pontificate of John III., and that only because it was included in Gregory the Great's register of letters. We do not know the wording of a single letter of Benedict I., though we hear of his injunctions. Even in Jaffé's *Regesta* we find only eleven documents belonging to Pelagius II. Hence any detailed history of the Popes of this period is unfortunately impossible.

We are better informed about ecclesiastical life in Rome and about many details belonging to the domain of religious and profane literature and art. Even certain questions regarding the administration of Italy and the Roman district can be settled with tolerable clearness, especially owing to the light thrown on the then state of things by the voluminous correspondence of Gregory the Great. Hence in sketching this portion of the history of Rome we shall devote our attention to its internal condition. The Byzantine Government, the last stage of that once so finely organised and powerful Roman rule, is the first thing to be considered.[1]

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393. The series of **Exarchs** in Italy, to give a glance here at its beginnings, did not commence with the famous General Narses. It is true that, even after the close of the Gothic War, he held the highest military command over the Byzantine portion of Italy, and also that he stood at the head of the Civil Government. He ruled the entire country from his residence on the Palatine in Rome. For all this, he did not bear the title of Exarch; his position was rather a personal one, and the office of Exarch had not yet been called into being.

When Narses had been disgraced (*ca.* 568), dying soon after, Italy had bitterly to feel his loss. The East-Roman General Baduarius made a transitory appearance in the campaign against

[1] On what follows cp. HARTMANN, *Die byzant. Verwaltung in Italien;* DIEHL, *L'administration byzantine.* MOMMSEN, *Neues Archiv*, 15 (1890), 181–186, supplements Hartmann and Diehl. Cp. COHN, *Die Stellung der byzantinischen Statthalter in Italien* (1889), and LAMPE, *Qui fuerint Gregorii M. temporibus . . . exarchi*, &c. (1892).

the Lombards, but he, too, was not yet described as Exarch. A standing army and a fixed military command did not then exist. This alone makes it possible to understand how the Lombards, soon after their irruption into Italy (568), saw their efforts crowned with success. Under their onslaught Baduarius, the son-in-law of Justin, sustained a sanguinary defeat at some date between 575 and 577.

After him, the needs of the times compelled the appointment of a commander-in-chief in Italy, on whom the title of Exarch was bestowed. This soldier, **Decius** by name, in 584, occupied the stronghold Ravenna, the bulwark of Byzantine power, which had been threatened by the capture of its port, Classis, by the Lombards.[1]

**Smaragdus,** the successor of Decius, probably arrived in Italy the next year. The nomination of this Exarch was an excellent choice. As a soldier, Smaragdus is extolled by Pope Pelagius II. for his victories, whilst Gregory I. describes him as a good churchman, who was ready to stand by the Popes. In 589, however, a new Exarch already ruled Italy, to wit, **Julian,** whose name de Rossi has shown to occur upon the fragments of a Greek inscription in Rome.[2]

Until Gregory's time, in 596, the General invested with the title of Exarch was **Romanus.** He was scarcely equal to the exceptionally difficult military tasks which devolved on him, and preferred to let things go their own way; on the other hand, in his dealings with the Church, he was none the less zealous and despotic.

The Exarchs, from Decius onwards, resided in Ravenna. Those who succeeded Romanus to the middle of the seventh century were: **Callinicus** (596–603), an able viceroy; then, much to the satisfaction of Gregory I., Smaragdus again assumed the government, though for how long we do not know; he was followed by **John,** who in turn was succeeded by **Eleutherius,** who ruled till 619. From 625 to 643 the Exarch was **Isacius,** succeeded in 643 by **Calliopas.** About 645 we find **Platon,** and from 649 till about 651, **Olympius.**

[1] Hartmann, p. 9.

[2] De Rossi, *Inscr. christ. urbis Romae*, 2, 1, p. 455. In the dated inscription stand the words: ἐπὶ Ἰουλιαν[ῷ] τῷ ἐξάρχῳ Ἰτ[αλίας].

## The Administration of Italy and Rome

394. The office of Exarch, as Mommsen has recently pointed out, was a natural outcome of the official position which the Gothic King Theodoric had assumed with respect to Byzantium.[1]

The Exarchate in Italy was simply the continuation of Theodoric's office of permanent *magister militum* of the Empire. Just as the Gothic King in the Emperor's eyes was the highest military chief, though the office he held was neither for life nor hereditary, so was it also with the Exarch. The Byzantine system of government allowed for similar plenipotentiaries in Thrace and in the East, where they bore the title of *magistri militum.* As, however, in Italy many other inferior officers were called *magistri militum*, the commander-in-chief there was distinguished by the title of Exarch. In North Africa, also, the chief military authority was known as Exarch, though, as is clear, for instance, from inscriptions of the African Exarch Sclomon, he was also sometimes called *magister militum.*

Hence the dignity of Exarch found its place quite naturally in Byzantine officialdom. The system of ranks and titles was indeed considered as something inviolable and sacred. Nor was the title of Exarch an unknown one, though in its earlier use it had signified something different, being reserved for the leaders of armies actually at the front.[2]

The Exarchs of Italy were, however, not mere army-chiefs, but also wielded the highest civil authority. They conducted the whole administration in Italy in the name of the Emperor, and controlled the revenue. For this purpose they had the assistance of a number of high officials selected by themselves—*Consiliarii, Scholastici, Adsessores, Domestici*, and *Cancellarii.*

That civil government should depend on the highest military commander was certainly no advantage to the country, for such an arrangement left a way open to despotism. Yet in the permanent state of war which followed the Lombard invasion it had become necessary. Little by little we find the military *duces* taking the place of the *iudices provinciarum* or civil governors of the provinces. Often the inhabitants had good reason to complain

[1] Mommsen, *Neues Archiv*, 15 (1890), 185 ff.
[2] Hartmann, p. 9.

that the administration of their provincial affairs was left to subordinate officers, furnished with ample powers, and who often used them without much scruple. The subordinate officers were, however, to remain, whereas the *iudices* disappeared from history during the course of the seventh century.[1]

The power of the Italian Exarch and his subordinates did not extend over Sardinia and Corsica, which, since Vandal times, belonged to the jurisdiction of North Africa, and depended on the Byzantine Exarch there.

The Exarch of Italy is sometimes simply called *Patricius*, or *Patricius Italiae*, Patrician rank being the highest rung of the Byzantine social ladder, and invariably conferred on the Exarchs. Except the Exarch, there was no other *Patricius* in Italy. Hence, colloquially, the title of *Patricius* was often used indiscriminately with that of Exarch. The title of honour peculiar to the Exarch was *excellentissimus*.

The highest Imperial officer in Italy after the Exarch was the *Praefectus praetorio per Italiam*, who resided in Ravenna, and was responsible for the administration of justice in the Byzantine provinces. This office seems to have been still in existence in the middle of the seventh century. We also gather that, under the Byzantines, the ancient offices of "Vicar of Italy" and "Vicar of the City of Rome" long continued to be maintained. The "Vicar of Italy," with the title *Agens vices praefecti praetorio*, was the permanent representative of the Empire in Rome.[2]

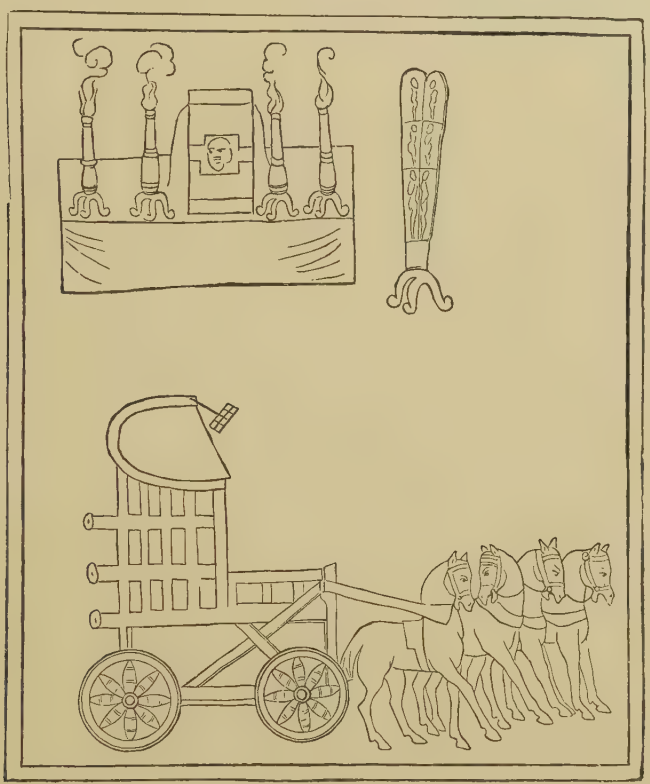
In Rome itself, besides the two Vicars just spoken of, the City Prefect, *Praefectus urbi*, still officiated, though in a different sphere of usefulness. It would not be hazardous to suppose that, on State occasions, he still availed himself of the ancient distinctions conferred upon him by the Empire, namely, of the right to use the State chariot, and to display the Imperial portraits (Ill. 179).

It is not, however, clear, from our authorities, what prerogatives this once exalted office had retained for itself. At any rate, its splendour was a thing almost of the past. From the death of Gregory the Great down to Pope Hadrian, *i.e.* till the end of the

[1] HEGEL, *Gesch. des Städtewesens in Italien*, I, Introd. HARTMANN, p. 44. DIEHL, 133.

[2] MOMMSEN, *Neues Archiv*, 15 (1890), 181; cp. HARTMANN, p. 39 ff., according to whom the *vicarius urbis Romae* mentioned by Cassiodorus was Vicar of the City Prefect.

eighth century, no Roman City Prefect appears at all in history. According to Cassiodorus, the Prefect of Rome under the Goths exercised jurisdiction, not only in the City, but also for forty Roman miles around. This would lead one to suppose that the then authority of the Prefect was still commensurate with his office. Nor is it impossible that the Prefect's office may have



Ill. 179.—Insignia of the Roman City Prefect.

From the MS. of the *Notitia Dignitatum* at Munich (Seeck, p. 113).

survived without interruption throughout the subsequent period, though with reduced judicial competence. However this may be, "the functions of the various officials subordinate to the City Prefect were gradually absorbed by the ministers of the Papal See."[1]

This absorption was not hindered by the fact that the Prefect, as well as the *Vicarius urbis Romae*, retained his *Agens vices* (or

[1] Hartmann, p. 45.

Vice-Prefect); there was indeed no lack of unnecessary officials. In fact, the increase in episcopal influence was largely due to the conspicuous failings of the great army of civil officials, especially to their corruption and incapacity.

In many instances it is a mere accident that there is no information to hand concerning certain Roman offices. The prætorship and quæstorship of the City of Rome are not mentioned after the middle of the fifth century, though we read in Gregory the Great's letters that, before entering the service of the Church, he had held the office of Prætor of Rome.[1]

Intercourse on affairs of State between the Exarch of Ravenna and the City of Rome seems to have been in the hands of the so-called *chartularii*. The chartularies of Ravenna repeatedly played an important part in Rome during the seventh century. What their duties actually were cannot be defined with certainty, but probably corresponded with those of secretaries to the Exarch.[2]

A chartulary, when staying in Rome, took up his quarters in the ancient residence on the Palatine Hill, which was still invariably known quite simply as *Palatium*. Here was also the dwelling of the Vicar of Italy with his swarm of Byzantine courtiers, and here, too, the Exarch of Ravenna was welcomed with Oriental pomp whenever he chose to honour Rome with his presence. When, in 653, the Emperor Constans II. visited the City, he likewise, was accommodated in the apartments of the venerable Imperial castle.

[1] MOMMSEN, *Röm. Staatsrecht*, $2^3$, 238, 534. Also GREG. MAGN., *Registr.*, 4, n. 2, p. 234.

[2] Hartmann opines, p. 33, that the original office of a *chartularius* was to superintend the presentations at the levees; whence the word *chartularius*.

## CHAPTER II

### THE CHRISTIAN PALATINE

395. As the conqueror of Italy and Governor of its Provinces, Narses, after having evicted the Gothic officials and courtiers, took possession of the halls of the Palatine. The rich spoils which he brought with him, treasures from many an Italian city, may well have lent passing splendour to the crumbling palace. We are told that Narses, like a king, was accompanied by a train of four hundred souls. Doubtless, with a Court on such a scale, he will have repaired to some extent the time-worn buildings on the Palatine. Even Theodoric had contributed a sum annually to be spent on the upkeep of this Imperial residence, and a Greek, who represented the Emperor, would scarcely have allowed himself to be outdone by a Goth in his care for the classic Imperial home.[1]

No buildings, not even any certain trace of repairs, executed by Narses can, however, be pointed out on the Palatine. There we may wander through the huge deserted ruins, stumbling at every step on relics of stately edifices, halls, porticoes, and heathen temples; of the Middle Ages, however, even of the early portion of that period, we shall find but few reminders.[2]

Imagination almost gives way under the effort of animating this colossal world of antiquity with Christian pictures, whether of Byzantine or later times. Christian annals speak mainly of the wreck and ruin of the antique. How much of their ancient splendour was left in the days when, under Leo the Great, Genseric's Vandals burst, plundering and burning, into the innermost recesses of these halls teeming with wealth? Who cared for the blackened, tottering halls, till the advent of Theodoric and Narses? Certainly none of those who, during the oft-repeated assaults and sacks of the City, sought only to wreak revenge and acquire wealth.

[1] On Theodoric, cp. present work, vol. ii. p. 229.

[2] On a source, once wrongly post-dated, which deals with the Palatine, see HÜLSEN, *Die angebliche mittelalterliche Beschreibung des Palatins* (*Mitth. des arch. Inst.*, 17, 1902, p. 255 ff.).

Even in the case of Theodoric and Narses, it is probable that they confined their attention to rendering part of the town-like Imperial edifices on the hill habitable.

It would seem that two groups of buildings remained inhabited; one opposite the Capitol and the Forum, on account of its connection with the City, and the other at the southern angle of the hill, near the so-called *Stadium palatinum*, which even now is relatively well preserved, and which commands the Appian Way. These parts appear upon our plan (Ill. 180),[1] at the top to the left and at the bottom to the right. It may be taken that, in later times, communication was always open between these and the other still occupied parts by means of the roads leading round the hill; whereas the middle of the Palatine, with its huge masses of building, must soon have become an impassable and even dangerous wilderness, owing to the accumulating ruins.

396. Upon the famous hill the old heathen temples began to shroud themselves in mystery. Such was the fate of the Temple of Apollo, adorned with the finest works of art, which seems to have stood to the east of the Flavian Palace (*Domus Flaviorum*); of the Temple of Jupiter Victor, situated on the other side, and which now could mourn the loss of the votive offerings made it by victorious generals; of the Temple of Cybele, the Mother of the gods, which, perhaps, of all the temples on that hill, was the last to remain an object of veneration to the many votaries of Mithra and devotees of Eastern rites. All around the Palatine stood temples, deserted and ravaged, to Victoria, to Divus Augustus, to Minerva, and to Jupiter Stator. The two libraries—Latin and Greek—of Apollo, stood exposed to the weather and probably long since robbed of their literary treasures; the towering Palace of the Emperor Tiberius, and the splendid one of Augustus—a model of elegant architecture. Even the palace of the Imperial Flavii was unable to maintain itself, that vast and massive structure rising in the centre with its broad ruined peristylium, adjoining halls for banquets and festivities, and reception-rooms in front, supported on either side by the Basilica and the so-called Lararium (Ill. 181).

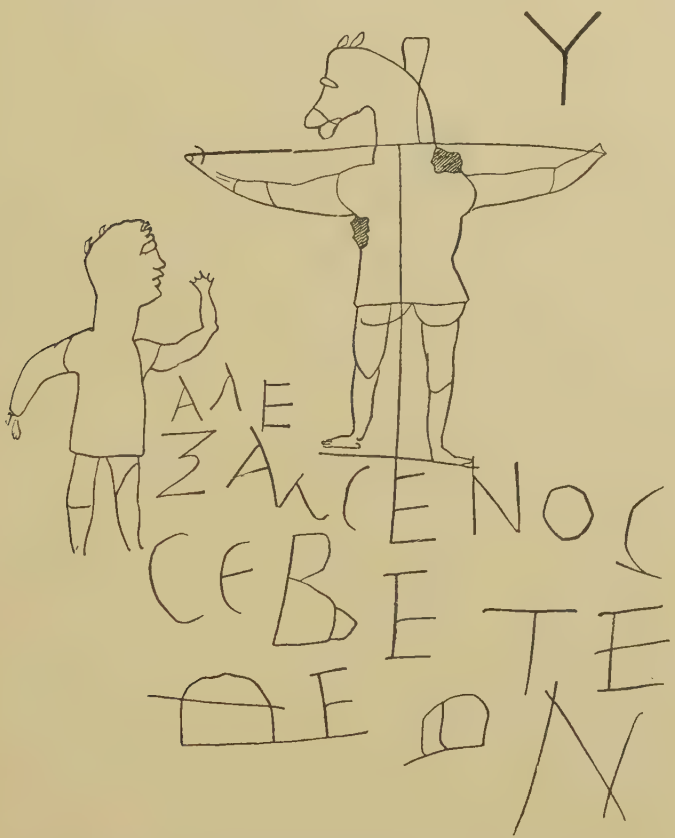
[1] Illustration 180 is an emendation of the plan in VISCONTI and LANCIANI, *Guida del Palatino*. The references will be explained later.

Ill. 180.—Plan of the Imperial Palaces and other ancient Structures on the Palatine.

Ill. 181.—Imperial Palace of the Flavii on the Palatine.

(Vertical section, reconstructed by Reber, *Panorama von Rom zur Zeit Konstantins*, p. 65.)

The Gardens of Adonis, which Domitian had laid out on an Oriental pattern, had long been forgotten, and were a mere wilderness. Lupercal, the legendary shrine, stood desolate since the time of Pope Gelasius. Many years had elapsed since the Pædagogium for the Imperial pages had sent out the last of its trained and obsequious servants to minister to




Ill. 182.—The Mock Crucifix of the Palatine.
ΑΛΕΧΑΜΕΝΟϹ ϹΕΒΕΤΕ ΘΕΟΝ (Alexamenos worships God).

the rulers; pages for the Imperial Vicar had to be imported from Byzantium, but the Cross and the Religion founded on it was now honoured upon the hill, where the walls of the Pædagogium had once been desecrated by the notorious caricature discovered by Garrucci.[1]

[1] Garrucci, *Il crocifisso graffito*, &c., 1857. Reproductions also in Kraus, *Gesch. der chr. Kunst*, 1, 173; *Das Spottcrucifix*, 1872; *Realencyk. der chr. Alt.*, 2, p. 774. The Crucified is vested in a tight colobium, and his feet rest on a support. His head is turned

The dweller in the home of the pages, who scratched this caricature upon the wall, shared the idea prevalent among the heathen, that the Crucified Saviour, worshipped as God by his comrade Alexamenos, had the head of an ass (Ill. 182). This same despised Saviour, in the sixth century and even earlier, had come into the possession of several much-revered shrines on and near this very Palatine. They served to make reparation for the virtue, religion, and morality formerly so remorselessly outraged on this very spot by tyrants and libertines.

397. At the western angle, above the substructure of the Circus Maximus, rises the church of **S. Anastasia,** the Court church of the Palatine. Its original name, in all probability, was Anastasis, *i.e.* Resurrection. In this quality of a church dedicated to the Risen Saviour, it corresponds to the Anastasis at Constantinople, which, in turn, was an imitation of that in the Holy Places in Jerusalem. Erected, as it appears, by the Imperial Court in the fourth century, it was richly endowed and formed a contrast to the fanes of Hercules standing beneath it in front of the gates of the Circus; namely, the *Ara Maxima* of ancient Rome, and the circular Temple of Hercules, both pretending to have been founded by Evander. On account of its connection with the Court, S. Anastasia was accounted the first of the Roman titular churches. In rank it came next to the Lateran Basilica and the church of S. Maria on the Esquiline. It enjoyed certain prerogatives with regard to the Station-services, which can only be explained out of the consideration shown by the Roman Church to the Emperor's Vicars upon the Palatine. For instance, it had its own "Station" on the morning of Christmas Day, when the Pope proceeded thither, to the Imperial Residence, to celebrate early Mass; the church continues, even now, to be a Station for one of the three Christmas Masses.[1]

From S. Anastasia, skirting the hill, we come to **S. Maria Antiqua** (Sta. Maria Liberatrice). This shrine, of which we

to Alexamenos, who is praying with arms outstretched. The latter would seem to be a member of the Pædagogium, whom the author of the graffito wished to tease. This is the commonly accepted explanation of the sketch, though of late some have seen fit to urge that the significance of the scene is a heathen one, and has nothing to do with Christ. In our opinion, however, the objections raised are not conclusive.

[1] On S. Anastasia, see *Anal. Rom.*, t. 1, p. 595 ff., with plan, p. 602. Cp. present work, vol. i. p. 192.

Ill. 183.—S. Teodoro Rotondo on the Clivus Victoriæ of the Palatine.

(Photo by Commendatore Carlo Tenerani.)

already know the story, stood on the north side of the Palatine, beside the ancient Vesta Temple, and can be traced back to Pope Silvester; it was also reckoned the first among the Roman deaconries; *i.e.* it stood at the head of the churches officially entrusted with the distribution of alms and with works of mercy. Here, too, the origin of this honorary precedence admits of no doubt. S. Maria Antiqua was the deaconry of the Court. In S. Anastasia spiritual blessings were bestowed on the soul; in S. Maria the Imperial Vicars dispensed temporal help to impoverished Rome. It must also be remembered that, at S. Maria, a Christian sanctuary was brought into contrast with a site of idolatry, and that such a contrast in the fourth century had enormous significance. Mary, the Virgin Mother of our Saviour, was here pitted against Vesta, whom mythology regarded as the Mother and Protectress of the Roman State, who was called the Virgin-goddess, and was served by virgins. The spiritual combat waged here in front of the portals of the abode of the Vestals has already been alluded to in our description of a visit to the Roman Forum.[1]

On the way from S. Anastasia, along the edge of the hill, we come to another church, the Trullus or Rotunda of **St. Theodore** (Ill. 183).[2] The mosaic of St. Theodore, an Eastern saint, in the principal niche, is of Byzantine character, and may date from the seventh or the sixth century. The foundations of the Rotunda show, however, that it was first erected almost in classical times. May it not have been the Palatine, *i.e.* the Court Baptistery? The Baptisteries were circular in form, and we know from other sources that, in the year 403, the City Prefect, Longinianus, erected a Baptistery for the church of S. Anastasia, certainly not far from the present building. The present Trullus, however, dates almost entirely from the fifteenth century.[3]

[1] Cp. my article on S. Maria Antiqua, *Civiltà catt.*, 1896, II., 458–478, with plans, pp. 460 and 463. Also present work, vol i. p. 244 ff.

[2] The diminutive apse at the back, according to the mosaic in its interior, is as old as the church, and belongs to rising Christianity. The Clivus Victoriæ may be seen to the right passing through ancient ruins on its way up the side of the Palatine Hill. Cp. this with our plan (Ill. 180), where the situation of the monuments will be found at the bottom and to the left. To the left of Ill. 183 appears the mediæval Torre delle Milizie, popularly known as Torre di Nerone.

[3] Cp. DE ROSSI, *Musaici*, for the above mentioned portrait, where St. Theodore appears on the right hand of Christ, with another martyr on the left. Regarding the building, see *Anal. rom.*, 1, 603 ff. The Rotunda was rebuilt by Nicholas V., whose arms are set above the entrance. The Gothic windows and the frieze of the roof both point to this period.

In the neighbourhood of S. Anastasia, but on the top of the Palatine Hill, there must also have been another church, the Oratory of **S. Cæsarius in Palatio**. So far nothing is known with certainty about its situation.[1]

With regard to the purpose of this chapel of S. Cæsarius, we know that it served, amongst other things, to receive and retain the likenesses of the Byzantine Emperors. The portrait of the new ruler was usually brought by an embassy to the large cities, and, after having been ceremoniously received, it was put up in a shrine. In effigy the Emperor still reigned upon the Palatine. Within due limits the Church surrounded his divinely instituted authority with a halo of respect, particularly on that spot where Emperors, in their ludicrous presumption, had once deified themselves. The name of this Oratory seems to have been selected, agreeably with the taste of the time; owing to the resemblance between Cæsarius and Cæsar, the title of S. Cæsarius seemed appropriate on the hill of the Cæsars. The title *Saint* Cæsarius also proclaimed the Christian character of the reigning Cæsars.[2]

A Greek monastery grew up later near S. Cæsarius. During the Middle Ages it stood first in rank among the twenty abbeys in Rome, an honour which it indubitably owed, like S. Anastasia and S. Maria Antiqua, to its proximity to the Court and the Exarch. In a certain sense it must have been the monastery of the Court, and, just like the parish church of the Court and the Court deaconry, it was fitting that the monastery of the Greek Court should enjoy special privileges.

The commencement of the Latin monastery of S. Maria in Pallara, on the Palatine opposite the Coliseum, is obscure. The Oratory existing there, and said to have been built on the site of St. Sebastian's martyrdom, is, at any rate, very ancient.

An official continued to be entrusted with the *cura palatii*. This we may gather from the name of one named Plato, mentioned

[1] This church must not be confused with that on the Appian Way, as Duchesne has shown in the *Bull. crit.*, 1885, 417 ff. Cp. DE ROSSI, *Bull. arch. crist.*, 1885, p. 327. Lanciani, in his *Forma urbis*, places it below the Palatine, opposite the Temple of Venus and Roma, among the ruins, which, for no reason whatever, were called the Baths of Heliogabalus; Duchesne had, however, previously rightly called attention to the fact that the Turin Catalogue of the churches of Rome, a work of the fourteenth century, names S. Cæsarius in Palatio immediately after S. Anastasia and S. Maria in Cosmedin. *Liber pont.*, I, 377, note 12.

[2] On the conveyance of the portrait of the Emperor Phocas to S. Cæsarius in Palatio under Gregory I., see *Greg. Opp.*, ed. MAUR., *Epistolarum App.*, xii.

in the seventh century. Plato's epitaph was in St. Anastasia's, and was put up, in 686, by his son, who later became Pope John VII. It praises Plato's solicitude for the "*prisca palatia Romae*," and particularly mentions that he restored the lofty staircase of the Palace. This last statement must allude to the still partly visible staircase leading down beside S. Maria Antiqua from the Palatine, which was the principal thoroughfare to the Forum and the City; it was also near this church that John VII. built himself an episcopal residence (*episcopium*); he also beautified the church itself.[1]

398. Small artistic objects, mementoes of the first Christian denizens of the Imperial palaces, have occasionally, even to quite recent times, been brought to light by excavations at that world-famed spot.

The large collection of clay lamps with Christian symbols, discovered under Pius IX. on the Clivus Victoriæ, *i.e.* on the side of the Palatine above the Forum just described, is particularly attractive. These lamps must have served for official illuminations in the inhabited part of the Palace, on festive occasions, secular or religious. In classic times, just as to-day, the Romans were wont to mark their merry-making by illuminations, and the Byzantines certainly adopted the custom from Rome. It is told of Constantine the Great, that he had his new City on the Bosphorus brilliantly illuminated from end to end on Easter night. In the North African provinces, where at present constant new discoveries are ever bringing fresh information concerning the habits of Imperial Rome, some fine collections of little lamps for illumination have been unearthed (Ill. 184).[2]

The Palatine lamps mostly display monograms of Christ or monogram crosses of various shapes; also the fish and the mystic palm-tree—in one instance, that of a Jewish lamp, we even find the seven-branched candlestick. On another lamp we see displayed a scene which has a special bearing on the Palatine and

[1] For Plato's epitaph, see DE ROSSI, *Inscr. christ.*, 2, 1, 442, n. 153; cp. *Bull. arch. crist.*, 1867, p. 10. For the buildings of John VII., see *Liber pont.*, 1, 385, n. 167. Cp. *Civiltà catt.*, 1896, II., 461 ff.

[2] On the lamps discovered, and, generally, on the Christian antiquities of the Palatine, see DE ROSSI, *Bull. arch. crist.*, 1867, p. 9 ff. On Constantinople, EUSEB., *Vita Constantini*, 4, c. 22. At other spots in Rome similar collections of small lamps have also been found, some belonging to classical and some to Christian times. They are usually of red or yellowish clay.

its spiritual transformation; it shows the figure of our Saviour holding the triumphant staff of the Cross in His hand, and placing His foot upon the head of the dragon, while a serpent and a lion vainly threaten the Victor of the world, thus exemplifying the words of the Psalmist: "Thou shalt walk upon the asp and the basilisk; thou shalt trample under foot the lion and the dragon" (Ps. xc. 13). This particular instance is one of the oldest of the use of this scene, which became a favourite in Byzantine art. That the lamp is Byzantine work is sufficiently clear from the tall and stiffly solemn figure of Christ (Ill. 185).[1]

But Byzantine and Roman, Christian and Jewish products are not the only ones represented among these lamps; some, from their decoration and the white clay of which they consist, must have come from Egypt or the Holy Land. Hence these comparatively insignificant objects prove in a sense how world-wide was the importance of that Roman Palatine where they were found. In connection with these Eastern lamps, de Rossi reminds us that, from the sixth to the eighth century, the soldiers and courtiers who formed the retinue of the Imperial representatives often came from remote regions of the East.[2]

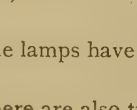
A large clasp of pure gold in the form of a cross, which was found accidentally in 1895 at the so-called Domitian Stadium, may have belonged to one of these foreign nobles. It is one of those *fibulæ* which were used to fasten over the shoulder the ends of the chlamys, or Byzantine Court dress. In this case a second cross may be perceived, surrounded by birds.[3]

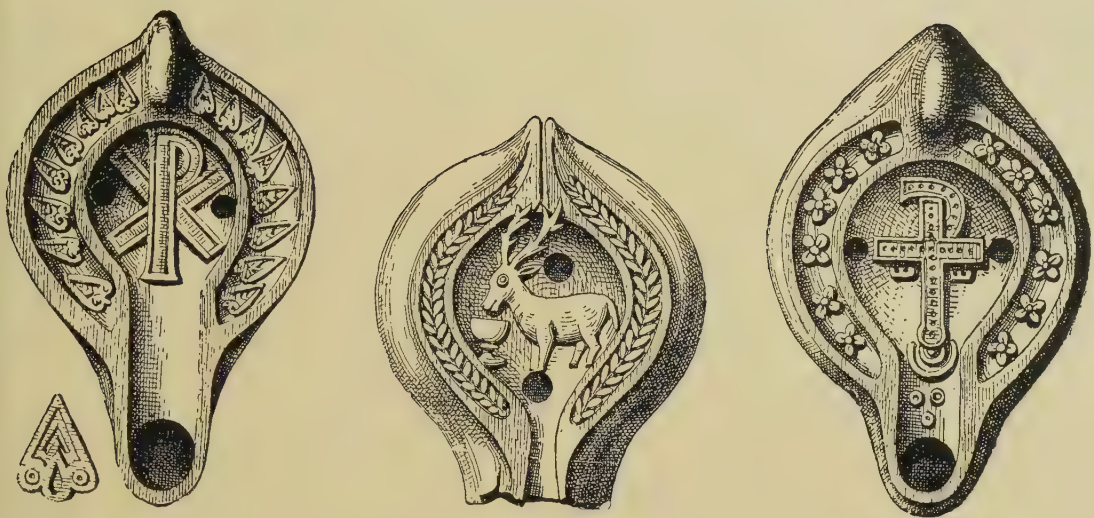
We may only allude cursorily to the early Christian articles brought to light in the same Stadium in 1893, consisting of plates, lamps, and amphoræ. One of the latter bore in red on its neck the first letters of the names of Christ, Michael, and Gabriel.[4]

[1] Reproduction in DE ROSSI, l.c., p. 12 f. Cp. with figure in KRAUS, *Gesch. der chr. Kunst*, I, 487, and in *Revue de l'art chrétien*, 1889-1893 (on Africa). Cp. the clay lamp with Christ as Dragon-slayer in KRAUS, ibid., p. 108, who states that three examples of this scene are known, dating from the fifth and sixth centuries.

[2] DE ROSSI, *Bull. arch. crist.*, l.c.

[3] Description and illustration of this clasp, now at the Museo Nazionale in Rome, in *Notizie degli scavi*, 1895, p. 360.

[4] On the fragments of an amphora with X.M.Γ. (Χριστός, Μιχαήλ, Γαβριήλ), see *Notizie degli scavi*, 1893, p. 118. Cp. DE ROSSI, *Bull. arch. crist.*, 1890, p. 41. On the other articles, *Notizie*, l.c., p. 163; some of the lamps have  in relief;  is borne as a stamp by the handle of an amphora; there are also two large monograms of Christ, with dolphins, on a plate made of red clay



Ill. 184.—Ancient Christian Terra-cotta Lamps from North Africa.

Ill. 185.—Clay Lamp with Christ as Conqueror of the Dragon.

(From the Palatine.)

Such discoveries may seem trivial and superfluous for the reader's instruction, but they nevertheless are important for the history of the Palatine—indeed, seemingly insignificant archæological finds often throw an astonishing amount of light on the history of Roman civilisation and topography. For instance, the Christian memorials found in the so-called Palatine Stadium point to the fact of the southern end of the ancient residence having, in all probability, been inhabited even in the centuries which followed Constantine.

## CHAPTER III

### GREEK COLONIES IN AND NEAR ROME

### From Aquæ Salviæ (Tre Fontane) to the Schola Græca and to Narses' Church of the Apostles

399. NARSES immortalised his name at the spot near Rome where St. Paul was beheaded; with his great wealth he there founded a Greek monastery, perhaps the oldest Greek one in Rome.

This spot was then called Aquæ Salviæ, and lay not far from the Ostian Way, more than a Roman mile beyond the Basilica of St. Paul, on an ancient road branching off the *Via Ostia*. This was the *Via Laurentina* which led towards Laurentum and the sea. Quite near this site a small heathen temple built of blocks of tufa was discovered not long ago. It stood close by the springs, which had a repute even in Pagan times, and which gave the place its name. These same springs in later times were popularly believed to have miraculously gushed forth from the three spots touched by the head of the Apostle as it fell after his decapitation.[1]

Any one nowadays pilgriming to this lonely region has no sooner left St. Paul's behind him, than he finds himself in a characteristic scene of the Roman Campagna. The verdant plain upon which flocks are feeding, bounded in the distance by the Alban Hills, is broken by low ridges, which descend towards the Tiber on the right in soft undulating lines. Here and there the evenness of the fair hills, as is so often the case in the volcanic Campagna, sinks in abrupt hollows, the rugged edges of which are covered with dark heather. Upon many a knoll in this broad wavy plain, humble homesteads and quiet farms have been established on the site of the grand villas of ancient Rome, and in some cases actually rest on the foundations of the olden edifices.

[1] The tufa blocks from this building, which were unhappily taken away after discovery, now serve as borders to the paths in the garden of the neighbouring Trappist monastery. On the *Via Laurentina*, cp. TOMASSETTI, *Archivio stor. rom.*, 1894, p. 68 ff.; 1896, p. 135.

In the lower parts of the district brooks meander through the damp meadows, scarcely noticeable save for their mysterious murmur. Near a bridge over one of these rivulets (Ponticello) the *Via Laurentina* diverges on the left from the Ostian Way, and ascends the eminence formerly dominated by a mediæval fortress. Thence the eye can descry the melancholy ruins of other olden watch-towers, which once guarded St. Paul's, its monastery, and the surrounding land tilled by the monks. In earlier times pious souls might have been seen wending their way through the vineyards to the left to visit the cemetery of St. Thecla, with its large underground church, which now rests peacefully beneath a hill covered by a farm. On the right below, on the bank of the Tiber, which here flows in a broad reach, lay Vicus Alexandri, an old river-port of Rome much frequented by seamen and merchants, but long since destroyed. Some time-eaten relics of mortuary monuments, and traces of enormous Roman sewers, are all that remain to remind us that when St. Paul passed along this road on his way to death, this place was a busy haunt of men.

Having reached the top of the *Via Laurentina*, we see at last the present monastery of Aquæ Salviæ or Tre Fontane, in a pleasant vale, nestling in repose and recollection among lofty eucalyptus trees. In its present form it is the best preserved mediæval abbey of Rome, and the impression of hoary antiquity made by the harmonious combination of buildings, gardens, and woods, and the memory of the twin founders, Bernard of Clairvaux and Pope Eugenius III., is even increased by the white-garbed figures of the Trappists who now inhabit it. The two handsome modern churches which rise among the foliage near the ancient pillared basilica and the weather-beaten monastery walls scarcely clash with the visitor's agreeable sense of being here carried back to the Church's early days.

Quite a century before Narses, the so-called Acts of Peter and Paul speak of this spot as the site of St. Paul's beheading. Besides, at an early date, various notices, dating almost from Constantine's time, allude to certain local reminiscences of Paul's death, which are probably connected with this place. Both in tradition and in art we find the pine-tree and the reed, testifying to a damp soil, used as symbols of the place, just as the terebinth, from earliest times was associated with the Tomb of Peter.

Moreover, even before Constantine, a Christian graveyard, the *Cœmeterium Zenonis*, existed near Aquæ Salviæ.[1]

Pope Gregory the Great merely penned the firm conviction of his day, when he stated that the Apostle of the Gentiles suffered death for Christ at Aquæ Salviæ. In the next century, and surely even earlier, Roman pilgrims, were wont to seek the monastery founded by Narses at this hallowed spot; the seventh-century pilgrim itineraries expressly mention this shrine.[2]

Even the excavations have also given noteworthy support to the tradition attaching to the neighbourhood of the three springs. During the work begun in 1867, an inscription of the year 688 or 689, was found, according to which the church erected on the site of the martyrdom had already, under Pope Sergius I., "long been in existence." It was a church, as its traces still show, which was built on the hill on the same spot and in the same manner as the present one, which dates from Cardinal Aldobrandini, in 1540. According to drawings made before Aldobrandini's time, it consisted of a sort of double building running parallel with the springs. Remains of marble sculpture, brought to light in the excavations during the 'sixties, might, judging by their art, belong to the Byzantine structure erected by Narses.[3]

[1] The legend of the miraculous origin of the three springs first appears in a spurious late homily of St. Chrysostom. The Πράξεις Πέτρου καὶ Παύλου of Pseudo-Marcellus has nothing at all about it, but give the place of death, clearly enough, as: μάσσα καλουμένη Ἀκκοῦαι Σαλβίας πλήσιον τοῦ δένδρου τοῦ στροβίλου. LIPSIUS, *Die apokryphen Apostelgesch.*, 2, 1, 284 ff.; TISCHENDORF, *Acta Petri et Pauli*, p. 35. Cp. for these and other data, DE ROSSI, *Bull. arch. crist.*, 1869, p. 83 ff., and KIRSCH, *Röm. Quartalschr.*, 2 (1888), p. 233 ff. DE WAAL (*Der Sarkophag des Junius Bassus*, 1900, p. 51) draws attention to the reed in the background of the scene, showing St. Paul being led to martyrdom; he also thinks that the ships visible on other sarcophagi confirm the supposition that this martyrdom took place here, near the Tiber. Cp. PRUDENTIUS, *Peristeph.*, 12, 1: "*Scit Tiberina palus, quae flumine lambitur propinquo*," &c. On the yet scarcely explored *Coemeterium Zenonis*, see DE ROSSI, *Bull. arch. crist.*, 1871, p. 74; ARMELLINI, *Cimiteri*, 1893, p. 500 ff.

[2] GREG. M., "*praeceptum*" in his *Register*, 14, n. 14; JAFFÉ-EWALD, n. 1991. On the contemporary inscription with the text of the "command," see *Anal. rom.*, 1, 158, with commentary and photo., Pl. 3, n. 2. The Itineraries in DE ROSSI, *Roma sott.*, I., 182 ff. and 141. According to the latter passage a "*monasterium*," existed about the time of Pope Honorius near Aquæ Salviæ. The chronicler Benedict of Soracte, about the year 1000, was the first to state that Narses was the founder, but de Rossi rightly considers the statement worthy of belief. This monk Benedict repeatedly borrows his information from inscriptions which have not come down to us. BENED. SOR., *Chronicon*, n. 9, ed. PERTZ. (*Mon. Germ. hist., Scriptt.*, 3), 699: "*Narsus fecit aecclesia cum monasterium beati Pauli apostoli qui dicitur ad Aquas Salvias.*" DE ROSSI, *Bull. arch. crist.*, 1887, p. 79. Cp. I., GIORGI, *Cenni sull' origine del monastero di s. Anastasio ad Aquas Salvias* (*Arch. stor. rom.*, 1 (1877), 49).

[3] The inscription in DE ROSSI, *Bull. arch. crist.*, 1869, p. 83. On the form of the earliest church, see also KIRSCH, *Röm. Quartalschr.*, l.c. The sculpture, remains of banisters, &c., have been put up in the neighbourhood of the mediæval monastery church of SS. Vincenzo ed Anastasio.

The monastery *Ad Aquas Salvias* remained a Greek settlement well into the Middle Ages. In the tenth century the Romans told St. Nilus of Calabria, when offering him the monastery for a Greek colony of monks, that it had always been in possession of the "Græcanician" nation.[1]

Even in the seventh century, it was already called in allusion to its inmates, "Monastery of Cilicia," evidently because it belonged to monks hailing from the province of Cilicia in Asia Minor. Now, in Cilicia was Tarsus, Paul's birthplace; hence it would seem that he was venerated here, on the spot of his glorious martyrdom, by pious ascetics from his native home; nor would it be at all strange, or out of keeping with the customs of the sixth century, had Narses himself, for this very reason, imported Cilician monks into Rome's earliest Greek monastery. Constantine the Great provides us with a comparison. He endowed the memorial basilica which he built to St. Paul with many gifts of landed property, the list including, according to the *Liber pontificalis*, an island "Gordianon, below Tarsus in Cilicia." We may therefore infer that at that day there was a wish that the region of Tarsus should show its gratitude at the very place hallowed by the entry of the Apostle into life everlasting, for having been privileged to be the earthly home of the Roman witness of Christ.[2]

The Eastern character of the monastery of Aquæ Salviæ clearly accounts also for its obtaining the head of the famous Persian martyr Anastasius, which brought it fresh renown. When this relic reached Rome from the East under Pope Honorius, it was handed over to the care of the Greek monks at the place of martyrdom of St. Paul; from this relic, in turn, comes the later name of Monastery of St. Anastasius, which later still was

[1] "*Graecanicae genti semper addictum.*" *Vita s. Nili lat. redd. a Caryophilo* (Romae, 1624), p. 153, in GIORGI, l.c., p. 55. Under Hadrian I. (*Liber pont.*, 512, n. 354), the abbey or "*ygumenarchium*" is mentioned. The contemporary story of an exorcism which took place in the monastery in 713 (*Anal. Bolland.*, 11, 1892, 234), also presupposes that there were Greek monks, and mentions the "*mansio* [=μονή] *sanctae Mariae Deigenitricis.*"

[2] At the Roman Council of 649, according to Mansi, there was present: Γεώργιος πρεσβύτερος καὶ ἡγούμενος τῆς εὐαγοῦς μονῆς τῶν Κιλίκων τῆς ἐνθάδε παροικούσης εἰς τὴν ἐπιλεγουμένην Ἀκουασσαλβίας. Cp. the μονὴ τῶν Ἀρμηνίων of Rome also mentioned there. According to the same text, the Greek abbots and monks in Rome formed a κοινόν (*corpus*). The name of "Cilician monastery" appears in the Acts of the Œcumenical Council of 680, with the further explanation: "which is called Baias." This must mean Baiæ on the coast of Cilicia, and not Sicily, where there was no such town. Mabillon (*Annal. Ord. S. Bened.*, 1, *an.* 649) is wrong in saying that Greek monks first came to Tre Fontane in 649.

qualified by the addition "at the Three Springs." Originally, however, it would seem that the monastery of Narses was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin. It was certainly not styled "Monastery of St. Paul," for the monastery of that name already existed at the Tomb of the Apostle near his basilica, and was occupied by Latin monks. Thus did Latin and Greek ascetics vie with each other in those hallowed meadows in zeal for the honour of the martyr; for he was indeed the "Apostle of the Gentiles," who had converted "the whole world," and preached to both East and West.

400. In the days of Narses the Apostles SS. Philip and James also were honoured with a splendid church modelled on the famous one to the Apostles in Constantinople. On the way to it, passing down the road which leads from Aquæ Salviæ to this church, we may be allowed to call the reader's attention to the other Greek ecclesiastical monuments, which, by no mere accident, are grouped together on this road.

Our way, especially after we have entered the City through the Ostian Gate, takes us past a whole series of sacred fanes, which are either of Greek origin or contain Grecian reminiscences. It even leads us to the Greek quarter, close to the Tiber, near the quays used by ships hailing from the East. This quarter, now that Narses, by his success in war, had restored Byzantine rule, was doubtless more animated than of yore. Many of the monuments and edifices of which we shall speak belong to the period of this General or of the early Exarchs.

First of all, before the walls of the great Basilica of St. Paul's, comes the cemetery in which Greeks and Latins lie together in peace. From this cemetery and from the Basilica itself the present monastery of St. Paul has secured a goodly store of Greek epitaphs. The last one bearing a definite date belongs to the year 534.[1]

According to one inscription there, which gives us the details, a certain Eusebius—whose name denotes a Greek origin—had the vast cemetery carefully restored towards the end of the sixth or beginning of the seventh century. The work was carried out on the porticoes and pictures of the churchyard, on its tesselated pavements, on its benches, windows, roofs, and outbuildings.

[1] De Rossi, *Inscr. christ.*, I, 476, n. 1048.

This worthy man and the *alumni* who helped him deserve our thanks for their enumeration of all these things, for no text so well as this wordy inscription enables us to understand the particulars of the vast cemeterial establishments attached to the great Basilicas outside the City. It tells us of structures with an upper room ; of others provided with a bath ; of apses closed by screens ; of a tunnel leading to the tombs of the martyrs, and of marble tables set beside these tombs. This aforesaid tunnel (*introitus ad martyres*) may have led the visitor to a spot especially dear to the people of Antioch. A priest of Antioch, named Timothy and worshipped as a saint, rested near St. Paul, in an underground crypt, topped by an oratory. The statements of Eusebius are unhappily too vague to do more than arouse our curiosity. No archæological or historical knowledge can suffice to do full justice to the handsome buildings of the great Græco-Latin Cemetery of St. Paul.[1]

Let us now proceed in the direction of Rome up the long, covered portico which leads to the Gate and thence into the City. We next reach an Alexandrian shrine, standing at no great distance from St. Paul's and quite close to the portico. This is the church of the martyred Menas. This witness to the Faith lay buried at Alexandria, but his Greek fellow-townsman had carried his fame throughout the Empire. Little vases with portraits of Menas, particularly with him depicted praying between two camels, have been found in Rome and other places (Ill. 186). They formerly held drops of the oil burning at his tomb in Egypt. Pilgrims when visiting famous shrines were wont to carry away such filled *ampullae*, which were called "Eulogies," and were deemed a sort of relic. The description left by the anonymous writer of Einsiedeln in the eighth century alludes to this church of St. Menas as the chief object on the road between St. Paul's and the City. Already at the end of the sixth century we hear of Gregory the Great making a station and preaching a sermon in this "Basilica" of an Eastern martyr.[2]

[1] Photo. of the inscription, *Anal. rom.*, 1, Pl. 3, n. 4, with notes on pp. 156 and 100. Cp. DE ROSSI, *Roma sott.*, III., 463 ff.

[2] ARMELLINI, *Chiese*[2], p. 927. The little oil-jars often bear the inscription : ΕΥΛΟΓΙΑ ΤΟΥ ΑΓΙΟΥ ΜΗΝΑ. Specimens of these in KRAUS, *Gesch. der chr. Kunst*, 1, 524 ; DE WAAL, *Röm. Quartalschr.*, 1896, p. 244 ff., Pl. 4. *Itinerarium Einsiedlense :* "*Inde* [*scil. a porta ostiensi*] *per porticum usque ad ecclesiam Menne et de Menne usque ad sanctum Paulum.*" DE ROSSI, *Inscr. christ.*, 2, 1, p. 31. GREG., *Hom.* 35 *in Evang.*, beginning : "*Quia longius ab urbe digressi sumus.*" On Menas, see also DELEHAYE, *Légendes*

We learn from the fragment of a Greek inscription about a corporation (*Somation*) formed of Alexandrians in Rome, who under their president founded an oratory or a church shortly before this time to "the most holy Menas" at some place not named.[1]

Immediately before reaching the Ostian Gate we again see an

Ill. 186.—Oil Vases from the Tomb of St. Menas with the Figure of the Saint and the Monogram.

oratory, near the Pyramid of Cestius, dedicated to the Greek deacon and martyr Euplus of Catania in Sicily. Pope Theodore, a native of Jerusalem, erected it about the middle of the seventh century.[2]

401. On the Ostian Gate itself the Byzantine cross previously mentioned is also a memorial of that period.

Having entered the City, we at once see on an eminence to the right the church and monastery of St. Saba, a native of Palestine, who founded the great Lavra near Jerusalem.

*hagiographiques*, p. 240. That these vases should invariably show two camels, instead of one, seems to be simply the result of the prevailing rules of artistic symmetry. Cp. Leclercq, art. *Ampoules et Eulogies*, in Cabrol, *Dict. d'arch. chrét. et de Liturgie.*

[1] Inscription in de Rossi, *Inscr. christ.*, 2, 1, p. 455, of the year 589. This is the inscription which tells us of the Exarch Julian. See above, p. 64.

[2] *Liber pont.*, 1, 333, *Theodorus*, n. 128. Armellini, *Chiese*[2], p. 925. Tomassetti, l.c., 1894, p. 86.

It was established by Greek monks, who perhaps wished in some measure to imitate here in Rome the famous *Cellae* of the Jerusalem Lavra; the name *Cellae novae* applied to this structure may contain an allusion to this. This name occurs in the eighth century, but in 649 the monastery most likely already had a Greek abbot; at any rate this place was already much favoured by St. Silvia, Gregory the Great's mother, who lived there in pious seclusion. Quite recently the remains of the original Greek foundation were found below the present church; it was then seen that the first church had been established in a hall dating from the Late Empire: this original church must be the oratory of St. Silvia, spoken of by John the Deacon.[1] The old monastery and its venerable church now belong to the German College in Rome, and their solitude is often broken by the light-hearted students who resort thither for recreation.[2]

Having passed the Emporium, and then the horrea or ware-houses of the thirteenth and eleventh regions, following the course of the Tiber, we find ourselves at last in the Forum Boarium, the headquarters of Greek life in Rome. The name of *Schola Graeca*, found in the Einsiedeln Guide, and the memory of which is even now retained by the Via della Greca, reminds us of the olden associations of this ancient market-place.[3]

In this vicinity, too, we find S. Maria in Cosmedin, popularly known as Bocca della Verità. The word Cosmedin, signifying "decorated," is evidently borrowed from the Greek. There was, moreover, a Cosmedin in Constantinople, another in Naples, and a third in Ravenna.[4]

The neighbouring S. Anastasia or Palatine church of the Anastasis, enthroned above the Circus, also discloses plainly its Byzantine origin. It was here that Leo the Great gave timely warning against the Alexandrian merchants, who were

[1] Cp. my art. *Archeologica* (*Civiltà catt.*, 1901, 2–3; 1905, 3).

[2] John the Deacon, in the ninth century, states that St. Silvia had lived "*loco qui dicitur cella nova*," near St. Saba's. *Vita Greg.*, I, c. 9. Now, in the *Liber pont.*, I, 471, *Stephan. III.* (768–772), n. 272, the building is called "*Monasterium Cellanovas.*" The abbots attended the sixth and seventh Œcumenical Councils. For the abbot, in 649 (who, in MANSI, 10, 903, makes his appearance in the Acts of the Roman Council), see EHRHARD, *Röm. Quartalschr.*, 1893, p. 39.

[3] LANCIANI, *Itinerario di Einsiedeln*, p. 511 ff.

[4] ARMELLINI, *Chiese*[2], p. 600. On the origin and design of the church, see STEVENSON, *Röm. Quartalschr.*, 7 (1893), 11 ff.; also, for some new matter and good illustrations, GIOVENALE, *Annuario dell' associazione artistica fra i cultori di architettura*, an. 1895. GRISAR, *Ste. Marie de Cosmedin à Rome*, *Rev. de l'art chrét.*, May 1898, and *Sta. Maria in Cosmedin*, *Civiltà catt.*, 1899, IV., p. 725 ff.

disseminating their own Eastern heresies among the unsuspecting people of Rome.[1]

Not far off, near the four-arched monument of Janus on the open place called the Velabrum, stood a church to George, the Greek saint, whom the Middle Ages so enthusiastically venerated as a knight. It adjoins the small Triumphal Arch erected by the goldsmiths to Septimius Severus. In the seventh century it was restored or rebuilt, probably by Pope Leo II. This place of worship still retains its olden character scarcely impaired, and also contains a number of Greek epitaphs. The oldest of these, however, go back no further than the second half of the ninth century.[2]

The circular church of S. Teodoro and also that of S. Cæsarius, on the Palatine, were equally memorials of the Byzantines. Other churches to Greek and Eastern saints were yet to be erected on the Roman Forum, till, finally, Frankish influence ousted the Byzantine in Rome, and the Western element took the place of the Greek. Under Felix IV. the martyrs SS. Cosmas and Damian began the series. SS. Sergius and Bacchus were patrons of a deaconry-church near the arch of Alexander Severus; to these saints, from the neighbourhood of the Euphrates, Justinian had also dedicated a church in Constantinople. The Curia of the Senate became the shrine of the Nicomedian martyr Adrian, and, according to a recently discovered inscription, an Hegumenos, *i.e.* a Greek abbot, and his monks had their dwelling in S. Maria in Aracœli.

It is quite clear that Greek settlers in Rome and the worship of Eastern saints were long favoured and promoted in the neighbourhood of the Palatine by the Byzantine rulers.[3]

## The Church of SS. Philip and James as a Memorial of the Re-establishment of Byzantine Rule

402. The Basilica on Greek lines to the Apostles SS. Philip and James, erected under Narses, to some extent constituted a monument of the triumph of Rome of the East.

[1] On Leo, see vol. ii. p. 64; and for S. Anastasia, *Anal. rom.*, 1, 595 ff.

[2] On the inscriptions and church, see BATIFFOL, *Mél. d'arch. et d'hist.*, 7 (1887), 419 ff. The *Liber pont.* mentions the church, 1, 360, *Leo II.*, n. 150, but the passage is an interpolation first met with in a tenth century MS. On the Triumphal Arch and its inscription, see *Corp. inscr. lat.*, VI., n. 1035; according to this, it was erected in 204 by the "*argentarii et negotiantes boarii huius loci qui invehent.*"

[3] On SS. Cosmas and Damian, see vol. i. p. 232 ff.; SS. Sergius and Bacchus, *Liber pont.*, 1, 512, 522. On St. Adrian, ibid., 1, 324, 327; S. Maria in Aracœli, vol. i. p. 248.

It stood on the road between the Palatine and the Baths of Constantine. Quitting the Roman Forum, after having passed through the forums of Cæsar and Trajan, we should have reached the western side of the Quirinal Hill, a spot proudly overlooked by the Baths of Constantine. At this point the base of the Quirinal was bordered by great porticoes, in the midst of which rose the fine new Greek church which we are about to visit.

This building has now entirely lost its ancient character, and is called the Basilica of the Twelve Apostles, though at first it was dedicated only to the two Apostles **Philip and James** (the Less), whose relics were brought over from the East, probably by the agency of the new Byzantine Government, and at the instance of Narses. The rich and costly structure, in the adornment of which no expense had been spared, was indeed chiefly intended to receive these treasured relics, so highly welcomed by the Romans.[1]

During the Middle Ages it came to be said that Narses had taken pillars and other building materials from the Forum of Trajan, and even that he had liberally made a present of Trajan's Column to his favourite church. As a matter of fact, this finest of Rome's Forums, in the time of Narses, had still a long existence before it. Not until much later did its famous *columna centenaria* pass under the care of a church depending on the new Basilica of the Apostles. The fable probably took its rise from the splendid pillars of Pentelican marble in the church, some remains of which can still be seen in a side chapel. The rich forest of columns and other ornaments of the new building may, however, have come from some ruined structure of Constantine's time, lying near or on the same site.[2]

On the same spot a smaller church once stood, called the Basilica Julia, having been consecrated by Pope Julius soon after Constantine's time. This church it was which was rebuilt on a

[1] In the *Liber pont.*, 1, 305, n. 110, *Iohannes III.*, the church is called "*ecclesia apostolorum Philippi et Iacobi*"; but in the same work (1, 500, n. 324, *Hadrian I.*, and 2, 28, n. 414, *Leo III.*) it is called "*ecclesia apostolorum in Via Lata.*" Benedict of Soracte, on the other hand, says simply "*sancti apostoli.*" Cp. DE ROSSI, *Bull. arch. crist.*, 1887, p. 80.

[2] For the fable regarding Narses, see VOLATERRANUS, in his notice on this church, written in 1454 (*Cod. Vat.*, 5560), and FIORAV. MARTINELLI, *Roma ex ethnica sacra* p. 64. On the latter, see DE ROSSI, *Inscr. christ.*, 2, 1, p. 354. The columns in the last chapel to the right have a triple spiral fluting, or rather one large band to two smaller ones, a peculiarity of Constantine's period. Some of the fragments of sculpture in the portico of the present church may have come from the sixth-century church.

far larger scale and to a special pattern, being modelled on the revered **Apostoleion of Constantinople.** The adoption of this model speaks much for the extent of Byzantine influence in Rome.

The Apostoleion, or church of the Apostles, on the Bosphorus, was at that time famous throughout the world. The Emperor Justinian had built it in 550 in the form of a cross with truly Oriental splendour, and curiously enough, it, too, occupied the site of an earlier and smaller Apostoleion built by Constantine in the new city he founded. Both the Constantinople churches, the older and the newer Apostoleion, were used as mausoleums for the Imperial family, whose sarcophagi rested there.[1]

The new Byzantine church in Rome was also given the form of a Greek equal-armed cross. In Rome, where all the churches were of the basilican order, such a building was a singular and new departure, only to be explained by the wish of closely imitating the edifice of Justinian at Byzantium. The shape of the cross was preserved in the Roman Apostoleion, if we may so call it, till relatively late times. Even in the fifteenth century, when great alterations had already taken place in the structure, Volaterranus particularly mentions this peculiarity.[2]

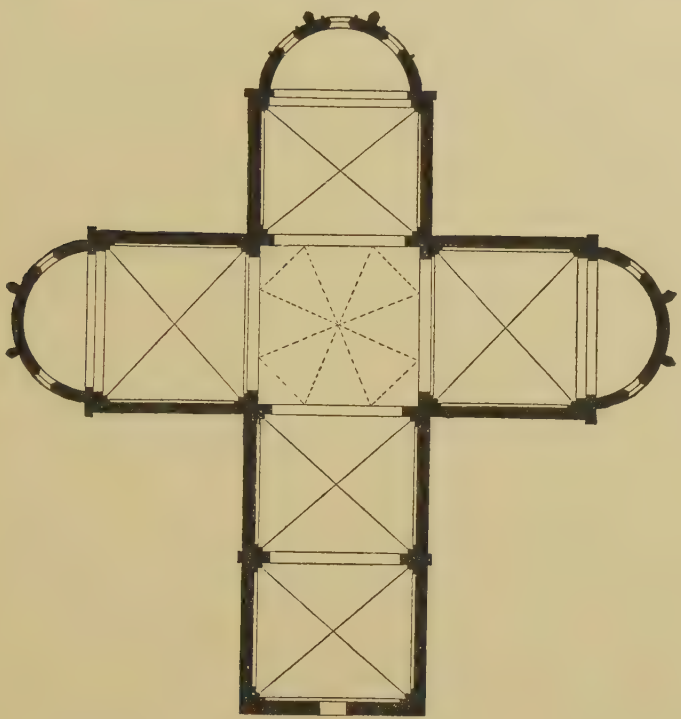
The spacious porticoes surrounding the Roman church also made it resemble the Apostoleion in Constantinople, descriptions of which allude to the extensive colonnades or "Periboloi" amidst which it was set. All sorts of rooms adjoined these arcades: apartments for the Emperor, for the clergy, and for the guards. There were also council chambers and baths, whilst the court surrounding the Apostoleion of New Rome was adorned with statues of the Twelve Apostles.

We must picture to ourselves the Apostoleion of Rome amid similar surroundings.

[1] Pope Julius (337–352), according to the *Catalogus Liberianus* (ed. DUCHESNE, *Liber pont.*, I, p. 8), built the "*basilicam Iuliam quae est regione septima iuxta forum divi Traiani.*" Lanciani gives a (highly questionable) plan on his *Forma urbis.* Constantine's church of the Apostles in Constantinople is spoken of by EUSEBIUS, *Vita Const.*, 4, c. 59; DEHIO AND BEZOLD, p. 44; HOLTZINGER, pp. 96, 206. On Justinian's new building, see PROCOP., *De aedif. Iustiniani*, I, c. 4. Cp. HOLTZINGER, p. 111. HÜBSCH, *Kirchen*, Pl. 32, diag. 5–7, a reconstruction, cp. HOLTZINGER, p. 113.

[2] "*In similitudinem crucis fabricam eius bracchiatam largissime inchoavit*"; so Volaterranus (see note 2, p. 87) on the beginning of the building under Pelagius I. At the time of Ugonio (*Stationi*, 1588, p. 80ᵛ) this cruciform plan must have already become invisible, owing to the restorations. Cp. the notices in the sketch-book of Cherubino Alberti in LANCIANI, *L'Itinerario*, p. 475.

Fine porticoes existed there even earlier, and no doubt Constantine had contrived to connect them in some way with his adjacent Thermæ. One wing even bore the name of *Porticus Constantini*, and may have been built by this Emperor; another portico formerly stood near the station of the first cohort of Guards. The Constantinian aqueducts coming from the Quirinal Thermæ supplied the basins and fountains of these great pillared



Ill. 187.—S. Nazaro Grande (formerly Church of the Apostles) at Milan.

Ground plan. From Dehio and Bezold, p. 44.

courts, as well as the still existing artistically wrought ancient cantharus in the atrium of the church. Perhaps, as at Constantinople, statues of the Apostles were set up all around; we almost seem to find an allusion to such monumental works of art in the "pedestals" and other buried remains of past glories, which Volaterranus says he saw "in front of the present church."[1]

[1] On the ancient porticoes round the Roman church of the Apostles, see Kiepert and Hülsen, *Formae urbis antiquae*, Pl. 3, where they are shown on a larger scale than in Lanciani's *Forma urbis*, Pl. 22, and are also oriented somewhat differently. Cp. Hülsen, *Bull. arch. com.*, 1893, p. 133. Whatever portion of them belonged to the

In short, as we have seen, no reasonable doubt could exist as to the Byzantine character of this remarkable church. We might even make bold to suggest that the building was intended as a mausoleum, first for Narses himself, and then for the future Imperial viceroys in Italy. The career of the Victor of the Goths came, however, to an unexpected end, and not Rome, but Ravenna, was to be selected as the headquarters of the Greek Exarchs of Italy.

Italy even then was already in possession of one conspicuous mausoleum of the same style, for Placidia's celebrated monument in Ravenna is also built in the form of a Greek equicrural cross. The memorial church of St. John the Evangelist at Ephesus also was built by Justinian in the cross form, without a doubt, in imitation of his Apostoleion at Constantinople. Moreover, St. Ambrose had already followed the example of Constantine in Milan, and dedicated a cruciform church to the Apostles (Ill. 187), which seems to have followed the lines of the Basilica Julia, the predecessor of the new Apostoleion. This Basilica, which was surely intended by Constantine for the honour of the Apostles, was also, in all likelihood, cruciform.[1]

403. Our further knowledge about this remarkable Greek building in Rome is limited to the following facts. It had been begun under Pelagius I., the energetic Pope, who stood in such high favour with Justinian. Not in vain had Pelagius spent so long a time in Constantinople, where he was able to admire the Emperor's great architectural enterprises. Having been begun under these auspices, it was his successor, then, John III., who, with the encouragement of Narses, completed Rome's new monu-

headquarters of the Vigiles (1 *Cohors vigilum*) may, when they fell into disuse, have been given up to the Church by Narses. On the *porticus Constantini* mentioned in the Regionary description (*reg. VII.*), see NIBBY, *Roma ant.*, 2, 799; BORSARI, *Bull. arch. com.*, 1887, p. 146; and LANCIANI, *L'Itinerario*, p. 474. The cantharus is in the Museo Nazionale. It is called "*calix marmoreus*" in the spurious Bull of John III. for the "*Basilica duodecim* [*sic*] *apostolorum*," see JAFFÉ-KALTENBR., n. † 1043. The description of Volaterranus (l.c.) contains the following words: "*Semirupti arcus et parietes in fronte praesentis ecclesiae et amplissimi postes et spatiosa superliminaria ac pavimenta sepulta.*"

[1] See plan of Placidia's Mausoleum in HOLTZINGER, p. 248. For the church of St. John, PROCOP., *De aedif. Iustiniani*, 5, c. 2; HOLTZINGER, p. 98. The Apostles' church of St. Ambrose is now called S. Nazaro Grande; it retains its olden ground plan in spite of having been rebuilt in 1075. DEHIO AND BEZOLD, p. 44. The opinion that the Roman church of the Apostles had its entrance at the west side in the sixth century (as it has now), whereas the previous church was entered from the east, arose probably from the fact that the cruciform plan allowed of several entrances. In the Apostoleion at Constantinople the altar stood in the centre.

ment and performed the ceremony of consecration. Both these Popes, together with their work, were immortalised in the contemporary inscriptions above the church's portals. Another ancient inscription in the apse boasts that John III. had pushed on the work in spite of the distress of the times and "though the world was coming to an end." It states that the church had been erected in order to unite the sacred flock of the people in a holy place against the assault of the wolf, and to set up on this site the light of the Apostles James and Philip. These last words contain a valuable historical allusion to the translation of the relics of the two saints, whereas the documentary evidence of this translation is unreliable, and has seemingly been distorted by legend.[1]

In the course of the iconoclast controversy under Pope Hadrian, we hear of the great splendour of this church; we are told that the church was remarkable not only for its size, but also for its resplendent coloured mosaic work; that it was also adorned with sacred pictures, which were objects of veneration. Pope Hadrian and his predecessor likewise restored the historic porticoes surrounding it (*portica in circuitu*). The church had become in course of time one of the most revered in the City of Rome; it had, for instance, the privilege of being, on the Ember Days, the Station for the *Scrutinia* or examination of candidates for Holy Orders, a fact which seems to give it a rank near Rome's cathedrals, S. Maria Maggiore and St. Peter's on the Vatican.[2]

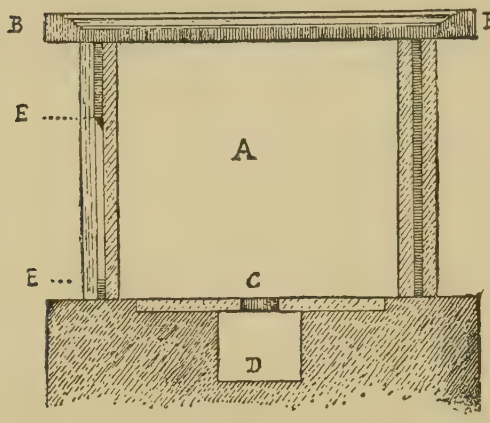
The regrettable alterations, which destroyed its ancient character, took place partly in mediæval times, partly under Julius II., when he was cardinal of this church, but especially through Clement XI. and Benedict XIII.

404. In the course of some recent work in the crypt under the church, it became necessary to open the ancient high altar, when an important historical discovery was made. This was on January 15, 1873. Under the later altar was found the little, original, sixth-century one with its relics complete. According to

[1] For the inscriptions, see DE ROSSI, *Inscr. christ.*, 2, 1, p. 139, and pp. 65, 248, 355; DUCHESNE, *Liber pont.*, 1, 306. In the latter inscription it is said of John III.: "*Despexit mundo deficiente premi*"; and at the close: "*Quisquis lector adest Iacobi pariterque Philippi | Cernat apostolicum lumen inesse locis.*"

[2] Hadrian, in MANSI, 13, 801; restoration of the porticoes: *Liber pont.*, 1, 500, *Hadrianus*, n. 324; this had been begun by his predecessor. Leo III. gave special care to the quadriporticus in front of the basilica (*Liber pont.*, 2, 28, *Leo III.*, n. 414). The Station in the *Ordo Romanus* in DEUSDEDIT, *Collectio canon.*, 2, c. 91, ed. MARTINUCCI.

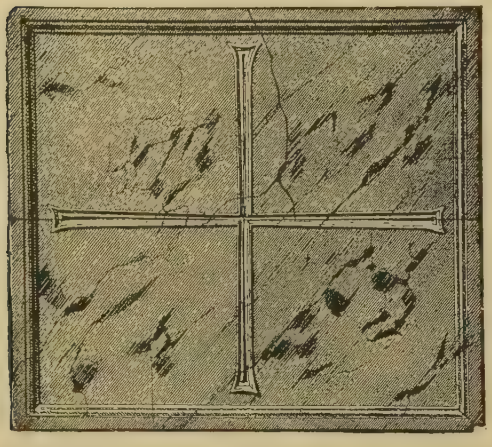
the account given by competent eye-witnesses, this find gave a far better idea of the manner in which relics of saints were preserved in altars at that period than any similar monument known (Ill. 188).[1]




Ill. 188.—Altar of the Church of the (XII.) Apostles in Rome.

Sixth century, See *Anal. Rom.*, I, p. 620.

Most of the parts of this interesting memorial have been preserved entire in the same church, and they well deserve a brief examination, since they afford an opportunity of discussing an important ancient rite, *viz.* that of consecrating places of worship by burying in them relics of the saints. The churches of ancient Rome, with the silent tombs of the martyrs beneath their altars, were pledges of the City's future. The dedication of these churches was thus tantamount to the taking triumphal possession of the ancient classic soil by the saints of the New Religion.



Ill. 189.—Altar Slab of the Church of the (XII.) Apostles in Rome.

Sixth century. After Rohault de Fleury, *La Messe.*

When erecting the earliest altar of the church of the Apostles, to describe their proceedings, the architects of Pope John III. made a simple altar-shell with flags of pavonazetto marble (A), covered horizontally by a marble slab ornamented by a cross in relief (B, B, and Ill. 189). The almost equicrural cross on this

[1] For report of the work, begun in 1869, and for discoveries made in 1873, see Bonelli, *Basilica dei XII apostoli* (1879), p. 50 ff., from official documents. Garrucci, *Arte crist.*, Pl. 423, n. 9–11. The church deserves a fresh book, for Bonelli's is no great improvement on the useless one by Malvasia (Roma 1765).

slab, with its enlarged ends, corresponds exactly with the sixth-century style. At the bottom of the shell a circular aperture (C) connected the altar with the small hollow below (D), containing the actual relics. In front of the shell was formerly the peep-hole or fenestella (E, E), which allowed the worshippers to approach in a measure the relics, and also to touch the lower slab (C) with such objects as they wished to be blessed. The altar outwardly resembled that of SS. Cosmas and Damian, which still exists in what is now the basement of the church, almost unchanged, since its dedication in the sixth century; in the latter case, however, the internal structure is unknown (Ill. 190).[1]

In the marble reliquary of the church of the Apostles a great many bones were found, also a little oval silver casket containing small pieces of purple material, and a silver vase for balsam. No inscription on stone or metal could be discovered, nor even any of those slips of parchment with a list of the relics (*pittacium*), so often found in later times. The bones were examined by the scientific commission which from the first had presided over the opening of the altar, and were recognised as remains of two adult men. Experts were sent with a tooth found, in order to compare it with the jaw of a skull preserved in the Cathedral of Ancona as the head of St. James. The broken tooth was then seen to fit exactly the lower fragment of a tooth remaining in this skull. After lengthy discussion of the whole matter before physicians, chemists, and archæologists, and after a favourable opinion had also been secured from the learned Giovanni Battista de Rossi, the commission announced that sufficient grounds existed for believing that the relics of the Apostles SS. Philip and James had been rediscovered.[2]

Ill. 190.—Altar of SS. Cosmas and Damian on the Roman Forum.

After Rohault de Fleury, *La Messe.*

[1] Garrucci, l.c. Rohault de Fleury, *La Messe*, Pl. 37. The altar of SS. Cosmas and Damian, in Rohault de Fleury, Pl. 82; in our view the author is wrong in ascribing this altar to the twelfth century.

[2] On the contents of the reliquary, de Rossi, *La capsella africana argentea* (1889), p. 28; a French translation of the same in *Bull. monumental*, 1889, fasc. 4–5; Italian

The account of these proceedings gives us an instance of the manner in which such matters are now usually settled by the ecclesiastical authorities in Rome. It may also serve to warn us against prematurely discrediting olden traditions regarding the deposition of relics in Roman churches. It is well known that during the Middle Ages relics were too often accepted without sufficient caution; many objections could be raised against the depositions, translations, and inspections of those ages. With regard, however, to earlier times, it is satisfactory to observe that certain fixed customs were followed, even in such small details as the shape of the receptacle for the relics, and that the care exercised by the church authorities in the translations—which, moreover, were less frequent then—was as full of zeal as the reverence displayed by the faithful towards such sacred remains.

As regards the shape of the **Reliquaries**, silver receptacles resembling the casket beneath the altar of the Roman church of the Apostles, and of about the same age, have been found in widely separated spots. In 1863 one came to light at Rimini, beneath a sixth-century altar; two others, ascribed to the fifth and the sixth century, were found in 1872 in the Cathedral of Grado. In 1876 a similar one was discovered in the church of St. Zeno in Southern Tyrol; the latter seems to date from the sixth century or later, and is preserved in the "Ferdinandeum" at Innsbruck.[1]

The most famous reliquary is the oval one taken from an early Christian basilica in Northern Africa, the rilievo work being of archæological importance; it is now kept in the Christian Museum of the Vatican. The interior of the altar, to which it formerly belonged, likewise agreed on the whole with that of the Roman church of the Apostles. It, too, was formed of two chambers, one below the other, united by an opening. This aperture in both altars reminds us, again, of the shaft in existence at the Tombs of St. Peter and St. Paul, and at

extracts in *Bull. arch. crist.*, 1887, p. 118 ff. His opinion, expressed at the third session, on February 27, 1873, is alluded to, but not printed, by Bonelli (p. 72 ff.). The account of the "piccolo dente molare sinistro," in Bonelli, p. 80. Text of decree by the Cardinal-Vicar Costantino Patrizi (April 19, 1873) regarding identity, ibid., p. 82. The discovered relics, according to Bonelli (p. 83), were deposited in the newly built crypt "*recte sub ara principe noviter constructa . . . in arca marmorea.*" In this crypt bases of columns and other remains of former buildings existing here are shown.

[1] On these silver reliquaries, see DE ROSSI, *La capsella africana*, p. 28.

many other shrines, where it served to unite the faithful with the relics of the departed Saints.[1]

## Consecration of Churches by the Burial of Saints

405. As soon as the building of the church of the Apostles was concluded, John III. arranged for its solemn dedication.[2]

This probably took place on May 1, as we may infer from the manner in which the two Saints, Philip and James, are mentioned together in the so-called Martyrology at St. Jerome. Even now the joint festival of these two Apostles is observed on May 1.[3]

The present Mass for this day also gives the impression of being the original Roman sixth-century Mass for this festival. It differs in several peculiarities from the Masses of the other Apostles. Thus the Introit and the Epistle seem to allude to a deliverance effected by God from great distress and dangers. Now, the Romans, through the victories of the Byzantines, had certainly been relieved from the horrors of prolonged warfare, and the rejoicings on the day of the church's dedication may well have been enhanced by the hope of better times to follow the arrival of Narses.[4]

406. The consecration of churches was then already customary everywhere. Just as the Jews had solemnly dedicated their Temple, and as heathen usage ceremoniously "dedicated" the sites of idol worship, Christianity also could not refrain from hallowing and taking possession of its sacred fanes by appropriate liturgical rites. The Church likewise termed this ceremony the "*dedicatio*" (in Greek, *encaenia*).[5]

The most striking part of this ceremony was the deposition of the relics in the new church; in fact this was the

[1] De Rossi gives drawings of the famous African reliquary in the appendix to his work quoted in the previous note.

[2] The *Liber pont.* says of the completion of the structure (1, 305, *Iohannes III.*, n. 110: "*Hic perfecit ecclesiam apostolorum Philippi et Iacobi et* dedicavit *eam.*" Ed. MOMMSEN, p. 157.

[3] See DUCHESNE, *Liber pont.*, 1, 306, for the passage of the *Hieronymianum*: "*In Phrygia, Hierapoli, natale SS. Philippi apostoli et Iacobi.*" As a matter of fact, Philip only was buried in Hierapolis, and in the same martyrology he also appears elsewhere.

[4] The Introit begins: "*Clamaverunt ad te, Domine, in tempore afflictionis suae, et tu de coelo exaudisti eos*" (2 Esdr. ix. 28). This cannot well refer to the two Apostles.

[5] Cp. DUCHESNE, *Orig. du Culte chrét.*, p. 385 ff. PROBST, *Die Sacramentarien*, pp. 87, 238.

essential part of the rite. First came the Vigil, a preliminary service on the previous day, in the church where the relics were kept in the meantime. St. Ambrose had already, after a manner, alluded to this custom, which might be compared with the ordinary funeral service. On the day of consecration itself the solemn procession of the relics began early, and the ceremonial resembled yet more closely a burial service. We must remember that a great number of the oldest places of Christian worship were over tombs of the saints, whether underground, as in the Catacombs, or above ground, as in the cemetery Basilicas. Thence came the custom of depositing in them bodies of saints, or other memorials and relics, before making use of those churches which had not been built as memorial Basilicas, but simply as places of worship for the congregations.[1]

407. Before, however, we follow the procession of the relics to the new church in Rome, we may be allowed to give a few further facts of history. We repeatedly hear of relics being expressly asked for from Rome for the dedication of churches in far-distant lands. The City of the Popes began very early to distribute these sacred gifts throughout the world.

For instance, relics of the Apostles SS. Peter and Paul came to Gaul, during the time of Venantius Fortunatus, for the purpose of a dedication, and, in graceful verse, the poet describes the ceremony of their translation and the popular enthusiasm at their reception. Roman relics of the two chief Apostles had been similarly used even as early as the fourth century, for instance, by St. Ambrose in dedicating his *Basilica romana* at Milan. Recent discoveries have shown that, in the African Provinces, altars containing relics of these two Apostles were called "*memoriae domni Petri et Pauli.*" Rufinus, the Praetorian Prefect at Chalcedon, in Asia Minor, had, in 394, received similar relics of SS. Peter and Paul for his Apostoleion there.[2]

[1] AMBROS., *Ep.* 22. Having been asked to dedicate a new church with relics, a vigil was held throughout the previous night in the church of Fausta before the relics of SS. Gervasius and Protasius, which were to be used. During the procession of the relics which immediately followed (the translation "*in locum, ubi Christus hostia est*"), a blind man recovered his sight.

[2] VENANTIUS FORT., Lib. 3, carm. 6, *ad Felicem episcopum. De dedicatione ecclesiae suae* (*Mon. Germ. hist., Auctt. ant.*, t. 4, pars 1). AMBROS., *Ep.* 22: "*pignora apostolorum Petri et Pauli.*" Northern Africa: cp. the reproduction in HOLTZINGER, p. 245, from DE ROSSI, *Bull. arch. crist.*, of the arch above a memorial at Megrun and our Ill. 158 in vol. ii. Rufinus, in DUCHESNE, l.c., p. 388.

Ill. 191.—Translation of Relics.

(Ivory tablet in Treves. Photo.)

Justinian, in 519, before he became Emperor, requested relics, or "*sanctuaria*" as they are called in the account, from the Tombs of Peter and Paul, that he might consecrate a church to the Apostles. When later, in 550, having attained the purple, he celebrated the dedication of that Basilica of the Apostles at Constantinople which we have so frequently mentioned, the most important part of the ceremony appears to have been the carrying by the patriarch Menas of the relics to the new house of God. Our authority tells us that, in the procession, Menas sat "in the Emperor's gold and jewelled chariot, holding the three reliquaries on his lap."[1]

Relics of St. Stephen the Martyr, according to a description dating from the time of St. Augustine, were brought to the Basilicas of North Africa with processions of lights, amid the psalms of the crowd, and the most moving demonstrations of piety. Here, too, we hear of the grand chariot in which the Bishop rode with the relics.[2]

A vehicle of this sort, together with the whole stately procession of the relics to a Basilica about to be consecrated, is shown upon the fine ivory carving in the Cathedral Treasury at Treves, a work of art belonging to about the fifth century. Of this we give an illustration (Ill. 191), because it affords so clear an idea of what the procession was like which once wended its way to the Roman church of the Apostles. At the head walks an Emperor, distinguished merely by a simple fillet about his brows (*tenia*); he bears a candle, and his nobles follow him, also with candles, and wrapt in their robe of state, the chlamys. Two Bishops, wearing the episcopal pallium over the flowing planeta, are seated in a splendid four-wheeled chariot, drawn by two horses. Together they hold on their laps a reliquary with a roof-shaped lid. The procession is seen passing an amphitheatre thickly crowded with sightseers; from the first storey thuribles are being swung. To the right may be seen the Basilica itself, with its circular baptistery, and, at the door, the Empress, richly clad, and holding a large cross on her shoulder, ready to receive the procession.[3]

[1] For Justinian's request when yet a mere *Comes*, see letter from the Roman legates to Pope Hormisdas in THIEL, *Epp. rom. pont.*, p. 873; *P.L.*, LXIII., 474. *Anal. rom.*, I, 271 ff. On the dedication in 550, cp. DE ROSSI, *Capsella africana*, p. 32.

[2] *De miraculis S. Stephani*, I, c. 2; *P.L.*, XLI., 835.

[3] Reproduced in KRAUS, *Gesch. der chr. Kunst*, I, 501; in C. WILLEMS, *La sainte robe* (1891); in AUS'M WEERTH, *Kunstdenkmäler des christl. Mittelalters in den Rhein-*

A similar procession, with all the ceremonial that befitted the exalted See of Rome and the position of Narses, accompanied the Roman translation of the relics of the Apostles Philip and James. Then followed the consecration rite properly so-called.

408. One of the initial portions of the ceremony within the richly decorated new church was to draw two long lines from corner to corner, bisecting one another in the middle (×), and marked with the letters of the Greek and Latin alphabet. This peculiar custom, which still obtains, is closely related to ancient Pagan practice; it had, however, cast off all profane meaning, whilst the slanting Cross, by reminding the faithful of Christ, gave the ceremony a Christian character. Such bisecting lines (*crux decussata*) were in ancient times employed by surveyors. Augurs, too, used them for measuring the ground intended for temple buildings, a circumstance to be particularly borne in mind in explaining their Christian application. The heathen augurs also inscribed the lines with letters. In the Christian rite, which adopted both customs, the lines were taken to stand for the initial of Christ, as the hymns sung in later time in this part of the ceremony serve to show. As for the alphabet, it seems to have expressed the same meaning as the letters Alpha and Omega alone, viz. that God is the beginning and end of all things; hence both the Cross and the alphabet proclaimed and honoured Christ's divinity.[1]

In early Christian times the alphabet was frequently used in a mystic sense, just because it was deemed an expansion of the Alpha and Omega, and a fuller and more solemn expression of these hallowed letters. In addition to the instances collected by de Rossi, we may cite the following one belonging to the period we are treating. Below the humble sculptures which, in the little town of Narni, adorn the sixth-century tomb of the saintly Bishop Cassius, a contemporary artist chiselled in one long line an alphabet which serves even to-day to remind us of the ancient use of the Alpha and Omega. It is, however, quite possible that here, and

*landen*, 3, Pl. 58, 1. All these writers, with Barbier and others, are inclined to place the work in the fifth century, but there is much doubt what particular translation it represents.

[1] DE ROSSI, *Bull. arch. crist.*, 1881, p. 140 ff. Cp. DUCHESNE, *Origines du culte chrét.*, p. 403. BARONIUS (an. 44) had already remarked: "*in dedicatione templorum multa fuisse gentilibus cum pietatis* [*christianae*] *cultoribus similia.*"

elsewhere too, the artist was no longer acquainted with the higher meaning once given to the alphabet.[1]

De Rossi, without being able to define its origin more closely, ascribes the introduction of the diagonal cross on the floor in the dedication of churches to "times long before the Middle Ages." We believe the custom existed in Rome even in the sixth century, and, at the Byzantine period, the use of the Greek alphabet combined with the Latin was peculiarly appropriate. The mystic custom of beginning the alphabet on the east side, a practice retained ever since, also corresponds with the earliest days of Christian Rome.

The remaining portion of the Roman consecration service by means of the deposition of relics, although by accident our authorities do not mention it till the eighth or ninth century, must also be of great antiquity.[2]

The new Roman church of the Apostles, according to the *Ordo*, or ceremonial, as soon as the procession reached it, was first entered by the Pope and some of the clergy; the other attendants remained at the door with the relics, whilst, in the meantime, the choir sung the litany. The Pope then prepared at the altar for the interment of the remains of the saints, blessing water mixed with chrism, and then using this with lime to make mortar wherewith to enclose the relics in the altar. He further washed the altar with holy water, as if to purify the grave by lustration. He then rejoined the procession outside, concluded the litany by a special prayer bearing on the consecration, and besprinkled the people with the holy water which remained over.

This being finished, followed by the whole multitude, he proceeded to bear the relics into the church.

The Pope was without the *planeta*, for his business was really that of a sexton. On reaching the altar, he deposited the relics

[1] The alphabet upon the tomb of Cassius does not appear on it in GARRUCCI, Pl. 393, n. 6, though it does in the figure given by EROLI, *Miscellanea stor. Narnese* (1858), 1, 280. On the alphabet, see DE ROSSI, l.c., and H. THURSTON, *The Month*, June 1910.

[2] *Ordo ad reliquias levandas sive deducendas seu condendas* in the MS. of St. Amandus. *Ordines romani*, ed. DUCHESNE (*Origines du culte chrét.*), from the ninth century Cod. Paris, 974, n. viii., p. 461. Duchesne (p. 391) describes the ceremony with the help of this and of another Roman Ordo, edited by Bianchini in his *Vitae pontiff.* of pseudo-Anastasius, 3, p. xlviii. In his letter to Profuturus of Braga (an. 538), Pope Vigilius speaks of the custom in certain churches of bringing in the relics before Mass; the Gelasian Sacramentary (liber 2, n. 1 ff.) has a *Denunciatio cum reliquiae ponendae sunt martyrum* (ed. MURAT., *Opp.*, ed. AREZZO, 13, pars 2, p. 233).

in the stone receptacle, of which he anointed the four inside corners, just as in antiquity it was usual to pour perfumes over highly venerated or celebrated tombs. The receptacle was also known as the tomb (*sepulcrum*). After the Pope had put on the lid, recited a prayer, and anointed the top slab in the middle and at the corners, the altar was covered with the customary linen cloths, a burning candle was blessed, all the lamps in the new church were then lighted, and there followed at once the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, which completed the ceremony of dedication.

There were special prayers for the consecration, with invocations of the martyrs, apostles, and confessors who, in a certain sense, were deemed to be present through their relics. These venerable formulæ were, in the main, already in use under Pope Gelasius, and were inserted in the Mass.[1]

In such wise did the Roman Church build up the mysterious edifice of its ceremonial at a time when ancient life all around her was still following its olden course. That her rites should display many points in common with traditional customs, whether secular or religious, was a natural consequence which should surprise nobody. The Church sanctified what she found, and, with loving care, used it for higher purposes.

[1] PROBST, *Die Sacramentarien*, pp. 238–245.

# CHAPTER IV

MONUMENTAL CONTRASTS IN ROME—THE IMPERIAL FORUMS AND THE FLAMINIAN WAY—CHRISTIAN CEMETERIES OF THE BYZANTINE PERIOD

## Trajan's Forum

409. At one prominent point of Rome all the classic life still pulsating in the City was concentrated more than anywhere else.

This was the famous Forum of the Emperor Trajan. Till a comparatively late date literary meetings continued to be held in such ancient halls and libraries as still survived; verses were recited, and poetic contests waged. On the spot where Sidonius Apollinaris had so complacently viewed his own statue in gilded bronze, Venantius Fortunatus tells us that in his time, *i.e.* towards the end of the sixth century, "polished verses" were still to be heard, poems, indeed, which he considers poets everywhere might take as their patterns. The art of Virgilius Maro and its imitation was the chief object of these gatherings.[1]

Without a doubt that child-wonder Boethius, son of the notary Eugenius, had there displayed his precocious talent. Boethius, who, at eleven years of age, was the glory of his Roman contemporaries, died in 578, and was buried in the family vault at St. Peter's. The curious epitaph, which may still be read in S. Angelo in Borgo, extols the boy in high-flown language, but very indifferent verse, as "an artist admired even by the Forum's best frequenters"; as a "poet of great talents," whose rare power had rendered him a "teacher of teachers"; though but a boy in age, Boethius had nevertheless left behind "great monuments of his mind."[2]

[1] Venantius Fortunatus, *Carm.* 3, n. 18, v. 7: "*Vix modo tam nitido pomposa poemata vultu | Audit Traiano Roma veneranda foro.*" Cp. *Carm.* 7, n. 8, v. 26: "*Aut Maro Traiano lectus in urbe foro.*" Ed. F. Leo (*Mon. Germ. hist., Auctt. ant.*, 4, 1), pp. 70, 162.

[2] For text, see my *Anal. rom.*, 1, 153, with a part of the original on Pl. 2, n. 2. De Rossi (*Inscr. christ.*, 1, 512, n. 1122) thinks a relationship exists between this Boethius and the celebrated philosopher and statesman. Had this been the case, the panegyric of the inscription would surely have called attention to it.

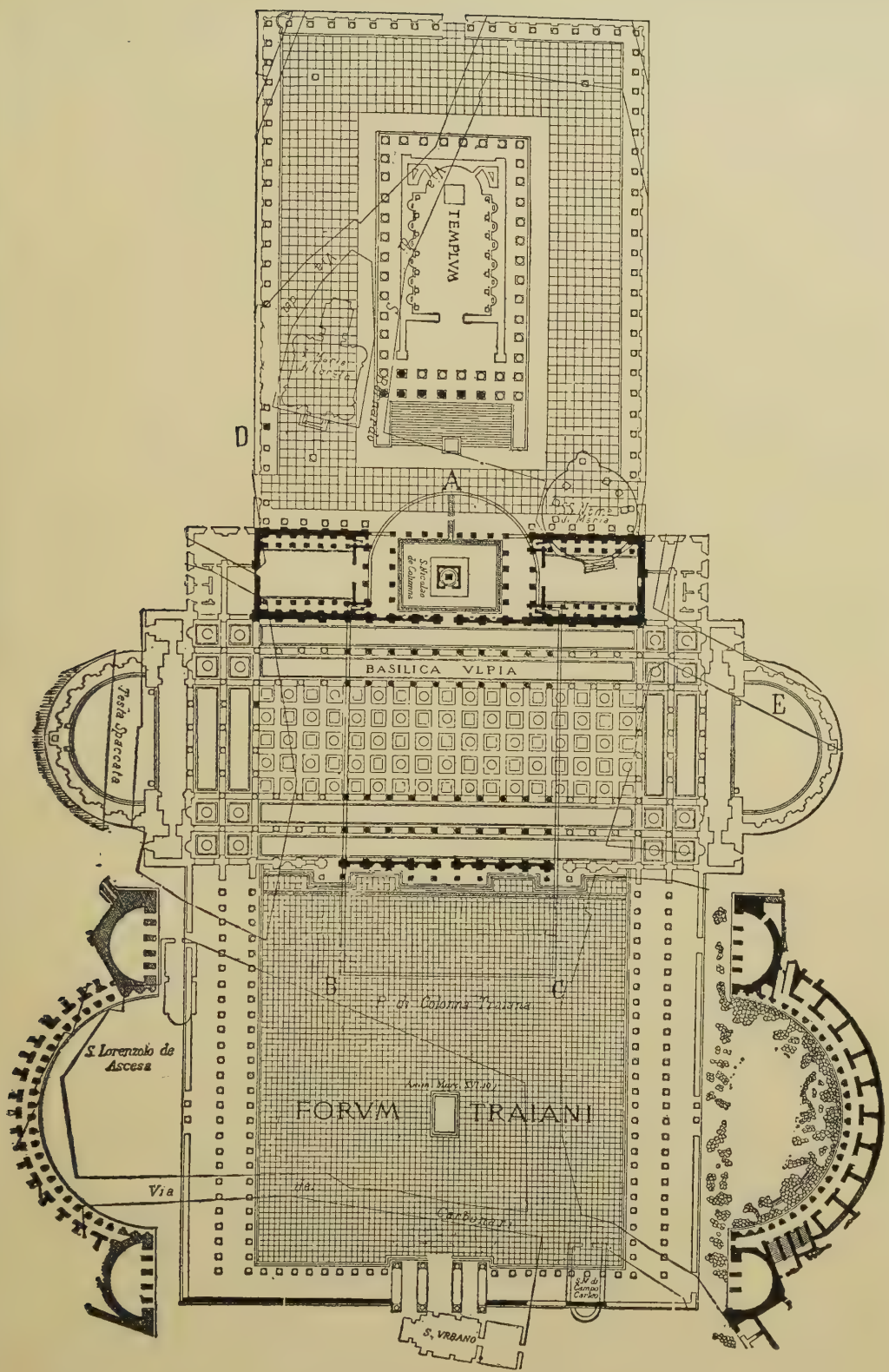
This epitaph on the noble youth (*clarissimus puer*), the hero of Trajan's Forum, is one of the last mentioning the ancient nobility of Rome. What, however, makes it still more noticeable is the statement it contains, in which the pious father mentions that for the salvation of the souls of the family six acres of land outside the *Porta Portuensis* had been formally made over for offerings and lights.[1]

The Basilica Ulpia on Trajan's Forum was, above all, well suited for grand assemblies. In grandeur and glory it marked the highest point attained by the architectural splendour of ancient Rome, and indeed deserved the speechless admiration which, as we have already heard from a contemporary account, the Emperor Constantius displayed for it when visiting Rome.

Even its position was a grand one. In front of and behind the Basilica stretched stately open courts. The larger, encircled by a double portico, and flanked by two wide open crescents on each side (*exedrae*), formed the Forum proper. As our plan (Ill. 192) shows, the Forum was entered at the point where the church of S. Urbano now stands on the Via Alessandrina. A triumphal arch with three entrances also stood there, opposite which, according to Ammianus Marcellinus, in the centre of the marble pavement of the Forum, was Trajan's gilt equestrian statue.

The other rectangular piazza on the further side of the Ulpian Basilica was of smaller extent, and its portico enclosed a Temple to the Emperor, the *Ædes divi Traiani*. In the middle, between the Temple and the Basilica, stood Trajan's far-famed Column, which, still in its old place, is the pride of the City of Rome. Any one now proceeding eastwards past the Column, down the street from D to E, would have the site of the ancient Temple on his left—between the two new churches dedicated to Our Lady—and the north wall of the Basilica Ulpia on his right. The two Libraries, the Latin and the Greek, belonging to the Basilica Ulpia, stood against this north wall near the *Columna Traiana*. On the accompanying plan they are shown in black, as it has

[1] The epitaph of Boethius, the Christian child-wonder, recalls the infant prodigy of Pagan Rome, Quintus Sulpicius Maximus, whose tomb came to light during the municipal alterations in 1871. It stood under the eastern tower of the Salarian Gate, then taken down. The epitaph gave full details of the many prizes won by the clever and eloquent boy at public poetic contests. CARLO L. VISCONTI, *Il sepolcro di Quinto Sulpicio Massimo*, in the *Bull. dell' istit.*, 1871, p. 98. LANCIANI, *Pagan and Christian Rome*, p. 280.




Ill. 192.—Trajan's Forum.

(Ground-plan from Lanciani, *Forma Urbis*, with some ameliorations.)

been possible to identify their remains. A good deal of the great Basilica Ulpia has also survived, but so far only about a third of it has been excavated.

Every visitor to Rome will remember those sad rows of broken columns still standing in a hollow (Ill. 193), and feebly showing the arrangement of the Hall. The depression in which they stand intersects the centre of the Basilica at right angles (see Ill. 192, A, B, C).

410. The Basilica Ulpia had five aisles, of which the width is shown by the remains. The columns forming these aisles stretch east and west beneath the modern houses which now bound the Piazza. There were eighty, or possibly eighty-four columns, of which portions of forty only can now be seen. To make the Basilica still longer, each end terminated in a large semicircle, of which the western one extended across the present Via Testa Spaccata to the foot of the Capitol, and the eastern across the Via Magnanapoli.

The splendid structure was built in two tiers, and so lofty was its summit that it rose above the top of Trajan's Column. Just as the superb bas-relief of the Column celebrated the Emperor's wars against Decebalus, the Dacian King, so the inscriptions on the high pediments of the Basilica proclaimed the names of the legions which had taken part in the campaigns against the Dacians.

The Basilica was to be a fitting memorial of the splendour-loving Trajan, of whose family (the Ulpii) it bore the name, and it also fulfilled this object by the costliness of its materials.

The pillars of the nave, which measured some 80 feet in breadth, consisted alternately of Egyptian granite and of giallo antico and Pavonazetto marble. In the aisles they were all of granite. On the walls, floors, and stairs lavish use was made of all kinds of marble; to the present day we have eloquent evidence of this in the fine fragments which remain. The floor of the nave, as was the case in the Pantheon, was paved with large square or circular marble slabs furnished by the quarries of Numidia and Phrygia, and polished in the best workshops of Rome. The aisles were radiant with other choice paving material. The central hall was covered by a richly decorated ceiling, with a cornice moulded in bronze.

The main entrance was on the south side opposite the broad, open square of Trajan's Forum, from which five steps of giallo antico, still partly traceable, ascended to the three portals of the Basilica.

Whatever met the eye in the building, even those portions of which the intrinsic value was less, bore witness to the pure artistic taste of the golden age. Everything was beautiful, from the double row of columns in front of the doors, and the beautifully wrought brazen doors themselves, to the lofty summit of the building, where four-wheeled triumphal cars were drawn by spirited horses, and where bronze-gilt insignia of victory glittered. The uppermost parts were supported by gracefully formed caryatides. Some portions of the frieze, of singularly beautiful design, are still preserved on the spot itself; others have migrated to museums, and especially to the Vatican. These fragments, though small, are interesting, and were lucky enough to escape the mediæval lime-kilns. Upon the portions preserved in the Vatican are bas-reliefs of winged genii busy pouring out punch-bowls, alternating with airily designed chimeras. Between these genii and chimeras were vases of curious workmanship on which there were other lively pictures, such as scenes from Bacchus-worship, with satyrs and bacchantes.

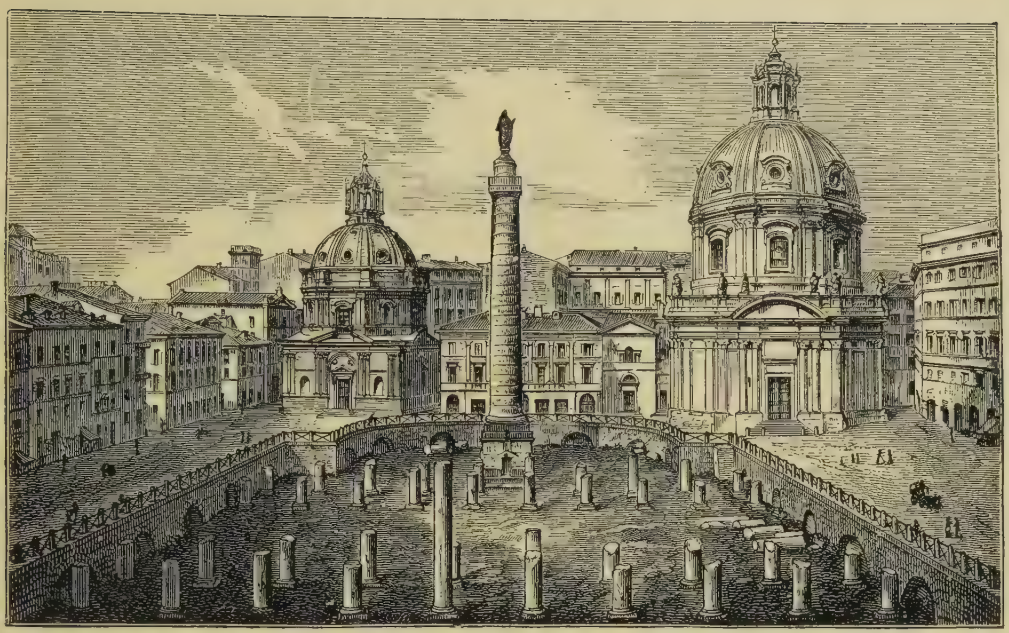
The Basilica Ulpia and Trajan's Forum were ornamented with many choice statues. Even in the fifth and sixth centuries noble Romans coming here for formal matters, such as the manumission of a slave, found themselves surrounded by the statues of their grand old generals, statesmen, and poets.[1]

But there were also many statues there of more recent celebrities. This has been shown by excavations, and we have, besides, the testimony of Venantius Fortunatus. In the sixteenth century a number of pedestals were discovered in the Forum belonging to statues of later age, bearing, for instance, the names of Anicius Auchenius Bassus, of Petronius Maximus, of Victorinus, the rhetor mentioned by St. Jerome, of the poet Claudian, and of the Consul Flavius Eugenius. The text of the inscriptions mentions that the statues were of gilded bronze.[2]

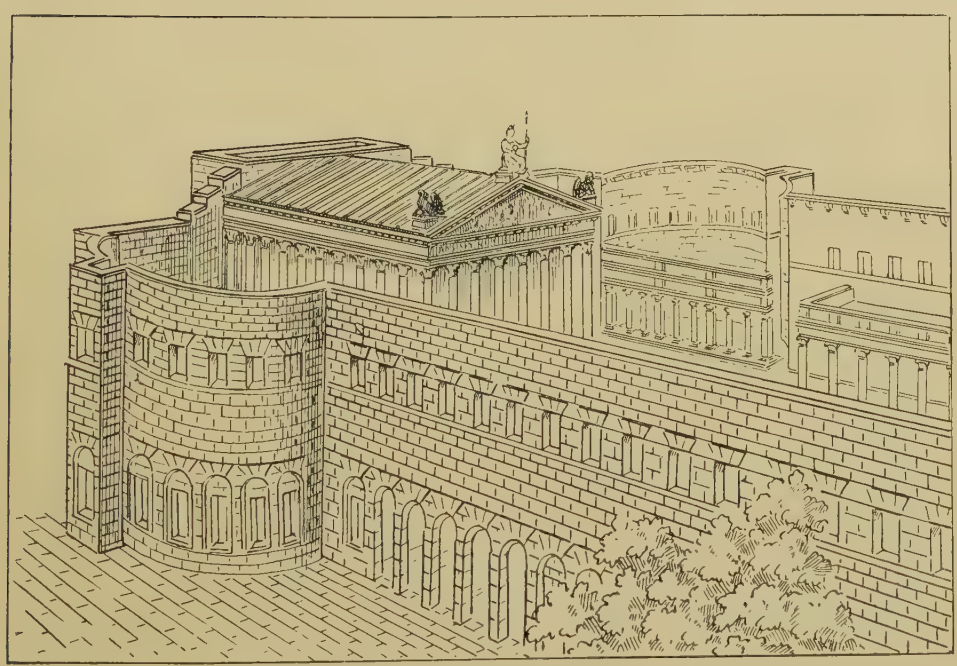
During the excavations of 1812 and 1813, which brought to

[1] That the formality of setting slaves free was performed here is clear from Sidonius (panegyric on Anthemius, v. 44).

[2] Nibby, *Roma antica*, 2, 196.



Ill. 193.—Portion of Trajan's Forum in its Present State.



Ill. 194.—Forum of Augustus.

(Hülsen's reconstruction, in Schneider, *Das alte Rom*, Pl. 7, No. 11.)

light the broken columns now visible, the base of a statue was also discovered belonging to a well-known later rhetor, Flavius Merobaudes, a Spaniard, who could wield both pen and sword. The inscription states in boastful language that Merobaudes had not forsaken literature, and his campaigns in the "Alpine peaks had but rendered his wit keener." Through Niebuhr the literary remains of Merobaudes have been made known. They are not, however, very remarkable for either wit or taste, but, on the contrary, display a great deal of "inflated Virgilian pathos."[1]

A fire in the tenth century seems to have been responsible for the first destruction of the Basilica Ulpia. In the time of Gregory the Great (604), it, and the Forum likewise, was still in good preservation, and lay on the route of the processions. A suggestive early mediæval legend even represents Gregory as pausing during one of these processions to admire Trajan's greatness, and, moved by the political virtues of the olden Emperor, especially by his clemency, as fervently praying for him.[2]

Doubtless, however, even in Gregory's time, traces of approaching decay were visible in Trajan's Forum. During the invasions of the barbarians this site must certainly have suffered. We should not be wrong in assuming that the grand gilt statue of Trajan had been taken down from the column, and that even the Emperor's burial-place in the interior of the substructure had been broken open and desecrated. Trajan's ashes had formerly rested there in a golden urn. We may well wonder who became the happy owner of this precious metal treasure.

Trajan's huge column ever fascinates the educated passer-by. Unfortunately, we are unable to deal with it here. We may merely state that it was not only a mausoleum and monument to the glory of the Emperor, but also a topographical memorial as well. Its height marks the height of the ground which Trajan had cleared away from this point of the City, in order to erect on a new and lower level between the Capitol and the Quirinal

[1] EBERT, *Literatur des Abendlandes*, 1, 417. The inscription says: "*inter arma litteris militabat et in Alpibus acuebat eloquium.*" NIBBY, l.c., p. 195.

[2] John the Deacon (*Vita S. Gregorii M.*, 2, c. 44), in connection with this, and following certain spurious Anglo-Saxon biographies, recounts how Trajan's soul was released through the intercession of Gregory the Great. In Paul the Deacon (*Vita S. Gregorii*, c. 27) this story, which obtained undeserved credence during the Middle Ages, was interpolated later. We shall revert to it in speaking of Gregory.

and Viminal heights, the Basilica Ulpia and his Forum. The ancient inscription on the Column tells us this to the present day.[1]

During the Middle Ages, when the Basilica, the Libraries, the Temple of Trajan, and the Forum were already sinking into ruin, the Senate of the City, together with the Church, took over the special protection of the Column. It was made over, together with the surrounding ground, to the guardianship of a chapel of St. Nicholas, called *ad columpnam Traianam*. An Act of the Senate, dated 1162, for the nuns of St. Cyriacus and for this chapel to which they were attached, says that the Column was a "public glory to the City," and that it must remain uninjured as long as the world endures. To this day the monument has not falsified the hopes of those olden City Fathers.[2]

## Other Imperial Forums—The Via Flaminia

411. Trajan's was connected with the Roman Forum by two other splendid Forums of the Emperors, that of Augustus and that of Nerva. A Triumphal Arch with a triple gateway and eight columns led from Trajan's to the **Forum of Augustus** (Ill. 194).

The two sickle-shaped ruins at its eastern end still give a good idea of the size and grandeur of the Forum of Augustus. Their massive masonry still reaches in places their former height, whilst between them lie the splendid pillars of the ruined Temple of Mars Ultor. Any one now coming from the Roman Forum towards the Arco dei Pantani, sees to the left, just in front of the latter, three towering columns, with beautifully worked entablature, which are the remains of that Temple. On the right he

[1] Inscription upon the Column (A.D. 113) : SENATVS POPVLVSQVE ROMANVS IMP. CAESARI DIVI NERVAE F. NERVAE TRAIANO AVG. GERM. DACICO PONTIF. MAXIMO TRIB. POT. XVII. IMP. VI. COS. VI. P. P. AD DECLARANDVM QVANTAE ALTITVDINIS MONS ET LOCVS TANTIS OPERIBVS SIT EGESTVS (*Corp. inscr. lat.*, vi., n. 960).

[2] The decree in question is in GALLETTI, *Del primicero*, n. 56, p. 323. The chapel was subordinate to the church of the Twelve Apostles ; this explains how Volaterranus (in the *cod. vat.* 5560, of the year 1454, in F. MARTINELLI, *Roma ex ethnica sacra*, p. 66) could say that Narses gave "*praecelsam quoque coclidem palatii Traiani*" to the church of the Apostles. During mediæval times the Forum was called "*palatium*," like so many ancient buildings which were in no way "palaces." The name of *cochlis*, κοχλίς, for Trajan's Column (and that of Marcus Aurelius) is met with during classic times, and is derived from the hollow interior, which was compared to a shell. In the hollow was a spiral staircase and small ventilation holes. The name of "*columna centenaria*," also used of both columns, is an allusion to their great height, though it does not signify that they were actually one hundred feet high.

looks down on the low-lying pavement of the Forum of Augustus, excavated only in 1889, from which rise sternly the semicircular walls of the enclosure. Formerly around the base of each semicircle stood splendid statues of Generals and others who had deserved well of the Empire, with inscriptions proclaiming their exploits, and calling on the people and patricians of Rome to follow their example. Only insignificant remains of these inscriptions were found during the search, though the excavators were particularly seeking for such texts. The Temple of Mars Ultor, in its best days, was a real museum of art, native and foreign. Amongst its works of art were the famous ivory statues of Athene and of Apollo, two bronze statues from the house of Alexander the Great, and the brass-gilt quadriga of Augustus.[1]

In the sixth century Romans would, however, have had to seek far afield for all these splendours carried off by reckless free-booters. Several of these statues, after Genseric's sack of Rome, may have found new sites on the Forum of Carthage, or in the palace of the Vandal King.

The Forum of Augustus did not stretch towards the south like that of Trajan, but rather towards the west and the Roman Forum, *i.e.* in the direction of the Arch of Septimius Severus. The **Forum Julium** lay, however, between it and the Forum Romanum. Both Forums are now traversed lengthwise, though not through their centre, by the Via Bonella, which was laid down in the sixteenth century. This street has made it impossible to recognise the two Forums, nor does it contain a hint of their ancient glory.

**Nerva's Forum**, adjoining the Forum of Augustus on the south, formed the usual ancient route to the Roman Forum, for which reason it was often called *Forum Transitorium*. In shape it was comparatively narrow, and more like a broad street than a Forum. The surrounding walls, ornamented right and left with beautiful Corinthian columns, bestowed on it a certain character of grandeur. These columns, four-and-thirty in number, were surmounted by a marble entablature, with a richly decorated attica, which may be seen in sketches made when a large portion of the Forum was yet intact.[2]

[1] JACOBI, *Grundzüge einer Museographie der Stadt Rom zur Zeit des Kaisers Augustus* (*Jahresbericht der k. Studienanstalt von Speier*, 1884), p. 70.
[2] See WEY, *Rome* (Eng. Trans., p. 52).

At the farther end of Nerva's Forum, as at the end of that of Augustus, stood a temple. It was dedicated to Minerva, and had six columns in front and two at the sides of the atrium. The two remaining columns, where the Via Alessandrina crosses the Via della Croce Bianca, still tell a tale of vanished grandeur. They support a tastefully executed attic and a broad entablature, where we see Minerva depicted as the patroness of industry. The columns are popularly known as "Le colonnacce." The Temple of Minerva corresponded at the other end of this long Forum with the Temple of Janus, which was commonly reckoned to lie on the Roman Forum, and which lay on the road thither.

From the Roman Forum, as the reader already knows, the series of gorgeous edifices continued without a break as far as the Coliseum. Thus, by means of the Forums, a chain of handsome public squares, porticoes, and buildings stretched across the heart of ancient Rome. This line of structures threw into the shade whatever else the City possessed of grandeur and beauty. At the same time, their long, sheltered ambulatories, huge halls, pretty gardens, and well stocked bazaars furnished the inhabitants of Rome with every convenience they could require.

412. In designing the *Forum Traianum*, its Imperial founder aimed at establishing direct connection between the southern and northern parts of Rome. Trajan particularly desired to unite the Forums already existing on the south-eastern side of the Capitoline Hill with the Flaminian Way beginning on the other side of the hill, and with the squares and buildings in the Campus Martius. The great height of the ground between the Capitol and the Viminal had previously hindered the establishment of such connection, hence the enormous levelling operations which made a clear space for Trajan's Forum, and which, as already stated, are commemorated in the inscription on Trajan's Column.

In this wise it became possible to reach the **Via Flaminia** and the northern part of Rome by walking westward, *i.e.* to the left, from the neighbourhood of Trajan's Column or the Temple behind it. A glance at the plan of early Christian Rome, at the beginning of our first volume, will make the matter clear to the reader.

The steep *Clivus Argentarius*, now the Via di Marforio, was also of great service for facilitating communication between the

south and the north of the City. The Clivus forsook the Forum near the Mamertine Prison, and passed over the eastern side of the Capitoline Hill. Here, on the height, once stood the *Porta Ratumena* of the Servian City Wall. Outside this City Wall began the Flaminian Way, constructed by the Censor Caius Flaminius. Here, on the right, stood the Tomb of Poblicius Bibulus, a monument of republican times, now in the centre of the City, and upon which the inscription of Bibulus can still be read. Near by, on the left of the Flaminian Way, was the so-called Tomb of the Claudii, the neglected, square, brick-built edifice in the Via di S. Marco, opposite the angle of the Palazzo di Venezia.

413. The Flaminian Way at the present day still cuts with its long, straight line the flat ground within the City, and is now known as the Via del Corso. In many places the ancient Roman pavement of basaltic blocks has been found at various levels beneath the surface of the present street. If, now, we follow this road to improve our acquaintance with this portion of the City, we may rest assured that we are in a thoroughfare which, since the earliest times, has never been out of use.

It is, indeed, a highway unequalled anywhere, full of monuments, full of life and Art, along which the wanderer passes from the northern slope of the Capitol to the Flaminian Gate, now the Porta del Popolo.

The whole length may be divided into three parts, which follow the architectural history of this part of Rome. The first extends from the foot of the Capitol to beyond the arch of the *Aqua Virgo, i.e.* the *Arcus Claudii,* which spanned the road at the corner of the modern Via del Caravita. The second goes on to the former Triumphal Arch of Marcus Aurelius at the commencement of the present Via della Vite. Finally, the third brings us to the Flaminian Gate.

The first portion derived its peculiar features principally from the buildings undertaken by Agrippa, the patron of the *Gens Julia;* in the second, the Antonines were the chief builders, while the last owes its wealth of classic structures to Augustus, that Emperor of glorious memory.

In our oldest Christian source of topographical information regarding this road, we find a curious blending of classical buildings

and Christian places of worship. We refer to the unknown author of the Einsiedeln Itinerary. His list of buildings standing on the left-hand side is short; he mentions only the *Columna Antonini*, *Oboliscus*, and [*ecclesia*] *S. Laurentii in Lucina.* On the right, however, he knows of more. He first points out the church of the Apostles, north of Trajan's Forum, "*Ad Apostolos*"; he next shows us a portico leading to the church of St. Marcellus, and speaks of the Aqueduct of the Virgo, even then a ruin, as *Forma Virginis fracta.* Further, he points to the Column of Marcus Aurelius (*Columna Antonini*), and enters a portico which takes him to the church of St. Silvester. He names one other building which he calls *Pariturium*, and, finally, the *Porta Flaminea.*[1]

## First Part of the Via Flaminia within the City.

414. We must amplify very considerably the curt statements of the Einsiedeln Guide, even as regards the first portion of the road, where we begin our investigations. First of all the Itinerary does not mention the vast buildings of the **Saepta Julia** at the beginning of the road on the left-hand side. This vast structure, by its very name, reminds us that it was a monument of the Julian clan. The "Julian enclosure" was formerly the place for the voting of the *Comitia centuriata.* Julius Cæsar altered it to a square surrounded by a marble portico, and Agrippa completed the magnificent whole in which shops were erected while games were held in its broad quadrangles. The Saepta extended from about the present side entrance to the Palazzo di Venezia, past the Palazzo Doria and the church of Sta. Maria in Via Lata, as far as the Virgo Aqueduct, and was thus of enormous length.[2]

A portion of the Flaminian Way was called **Via Lata**, probably on account of the contrast between the broadness of the road here compared with its narrow commencement. The church of Our Lady, which to this day retains the name of Via Lata, seems to have been in existence even under Pope Hadrian I.

[1] *Itinerarium Einsiedlense*, n. 4: "*a porta flaminea usque via lateranense.*" The Itinerary follows a direction opposed to ours. For a commentary on its statements, see LANCIANI, *L' itinerario* (*Monumenti antichi*, t. 1, 1891), p. 463 ff.

[2] On the boundaries of the Saepta, see LANCIANI, *Archiv. della soc. rom. di stor. patria*, 1896, p. 453.

(772–795), but was certainly not erected previous to the seventh century, for it is most unlikely that it would have been allowed to find a place within the public Saepta at an earlier date. The original church of Sta. Maria in Via Lata stands beneath the present one, the ancient street being considerably lower than the present level. It was in this substructure that late mediæval legends located the prison of St. Paul, a fable which is not only quite devoid of proof, but has against it the strongest topographical difficulties.[1]

In the Middle Ages we also hear of a certain Diburium or Deburo, near the church. This was probably an allusion to the ancient Diribitorium, which was early destroyed, but which formerly served as a polling-booth.[2]

At the present street corner of Sta. Maria in Via Lata the first triumphal arch spanned the Flaminian Way. It was called *Arcus novus*, and was originally dedicated to the memory of Diocletian, the persecutor of the Christians. At the time of our visit, *i.e.* in the sixth century, the statue of Diocletian had, however, doubtless long given up its position on the top of the Arch. Even if the barbarians had not taken it down, it can scarcely have escaped the Christians' hatred of the accursed Emperor.

Opposite the Saepta Julia, just described, a remarkable series of grand **Porticoes** began on the right-hand side of the Way. These were the colonnades which enclosed the church of SS. Philip and James, and which were connected with the porticoes of Trajan's Forum. These porticoes, which formerly comprised the barracks of the first cohort of Vigiles and the Catabulum, as already described, were altered by Constantine the Great. When the earliest church of the Apostles was erected here under Pope Julius, they were brought into architectural connection with it, and later still, when Narses rebuilt the Apostoleion, they were doubtless again forced to subserve the new place.[3]

[1] On the origin of the church, see DUCHESNE, *Liber pont.*, 2, 41, note 65. On the tradition concerning St. Paul, the historian of this church, F. Martinelli (*Primo trofeo*, &c., 1655), cannot adduce any testimony earlier than the Middle Ages. The inscription he quotes on p. 56 ("*Oratorium quondam S. Pauli*," &c.) belongs to the fifteenth or beginning of the sixteenth century, as is clear from the form of its letters.

[2] Hülsen (*Bull. arch. com.*, 1893, p. 140) thinks the *Diribitorium* was a "vasta sala . . . posta nella parte mezzana del piano superiore del [*porticus*] *Saeptorum*." On its mediæval name, see JORDAN, *Topogr.*, 2, 417.

[3] Lanciani (*Itin. di Einsiedeln*, p. 471) has clearly proved against Jordan (*Forma Urbis*, Pl. VI., n. 36[1]) that the piece of the Capitoline City-plan with the long porticoes and peristyles, belongs to the right side of the road, and not to the left. Cp., however,

The **Catabulum** just spoken of was a large hall for vehicles, and its favourable situation in the middle of the City made it the the central station of the public carriers, for whom indeed it was intended. Here, quite close to the ancient titular church of St. Marcellus, probably on its left, were standing-grounds and stables for the use of the "Catabulenses." This name appears during the sixth century in the letters of Cassiodorus, where it is applied to such carriers, for instance, in speaking of some convoys of marble blocks which were to be forwarded to Ravenna by the "Catabulenses" of Rome.[1]

The well-known legend of the saintly Pope Marcellus was even then in circulation, for the *Liber pontificalis* narrates how, in the time of persecution, he had been condemned to live in the stables and attend to the beasts of burden (*animalia catabuli*). It is a fact that this still existing titular church of **S. Marcellus** was standing on this site as early as 418. However confused may be the beautiful tales told even in antiquity of the sufferings and death of this holy Pope, the fact of this church being situated so near the haunt of the Catabulenses is one which deserves consideration. Formerly this circumstance was overlooked, and only lately has attention been given to this site of the ancient Catabulum.[2]

Quitting these Christian reminiscences of the neighbourhood, we again revert, with a suddenness strangely in keeping with the then character of Rome, to other buildings bearing grand heathen names.

for the restored topography of this district, HÜLSEN, *Bull. arch. com.*, 1894, p. 133, and Pl. 6, where he gives the porticoes a greater extent than does Lanciani in his *Forma Urbis*, assigning them a length of nearly five hundred feet, so that they reach the foot of the Quirinal, and comprise the later *porticus Constantini* as well as the site of the church of the Apostles. What has been said previously (p. 88), as well as certain mediæval notices, seem to support Hülsen's view.

[1] CASSIODORUS, *Var.*, 3, n. 10: "*marmora, quae de domo Pinciana constat esse deposita, ad Ravennatem urbem per catabulenses vestra ordinatione dirigantur.*" Cp. 4, n. 47. *Cod. Theodos.*, 14, 3, n. 9, 10. On the "catabulum" or "catabolum," see CANTARELLI, *Bull. arch. com.*, 1888, p. 386, and ROSTOWZEW, *Mitth. des archäol. Instituts*, 1896, p. 321. "Catabulum" etymologically means a place for unloading.

[2] DUCHESNE, *Liber pont.*, 1, 165, 166, and, after him, LANCIANI, *L'itinerario*, p. 470, 473. On the origin of the *Titulus Marcelli*, see vol. i. p. 191. The legend of St. Marcellus, as given by the Bollandists (*Acta SS.*, Jan., tom. 2, p. 9), contains many errors. The author of the *Liber pont.*, on the contrary, has made use of an earlier and relatively better account. He supposes Pope Marcellus to have been born in the "*regio via lata*," and Lucina to have founded the *Titulus* in a house belonging to her, where Marcellus died while attending to the animals of the Catabulum. Cp. DUCHESNE, *Liber pont.*, 1, XCIX. Where Armellini (*Chiese*[2], p. 254) gathered his curious piece of information that this church, previous to its restoration in 1519, was oriented in a direction opposite to its present one, I have been unable to discover.

Adjoining the church of Sta. Maria in Via Lata, a second arch spanned the Flaminian Way, that of the Aqueduct of the *Virgo*. This is not a triumphal arch, but a monumental structure carrying the water-way of the "Virgin" across the road. Its more usual name, **Arch of Claudius,** was derived from its builder, the Emperor Claudius, whence it was called *Arcus*, or better, *Fornix Claudii*. The long series of arches, bringing the water of the *Virgo* from the Campagna through the City, starts below the Pincian Hill. In the present Via del Collegio Nazareno, we may still see in the depths two piers of an arch rising from the ground. The series passes by way of the Via delle Vergini and the present Palazzo Sciarra till it crosses the Flaminian Way at the northern corner of the Via del Caravita, close by Sta. Maria in Via Lata.[1]

In such wise did this aqueduct carry its waters to the Campus Martius and the Thermæ of Agrippa to the south of the Pantheon.

Between these grand Baths of Agrippa and the Saepta Julia stood the **Iseum** and **Serapeum** and the Temple of **Minerva Chalcidica**. The memory of the latter site has been kept by the later church of Sta. Maria sopra Minerva. The temple of the Egyptian deities Isis and Serapis, which was also a valuable museum, has likewise left a local reminder in the name of the church of S. Stefano del Cacco, the common people having bestowed the name of "Cacco" on the Egyptian statue of a baboon which remained there till a late date.[2]

415. To confine ourselves to the ancient monuments lying in the immediate vicinity of the Flaminian Way. The Aqueduct of the Virgin was followed by two great buildings, of which the purpose was almost identical; to the left was the Portico of the Argonauts, with the Basilica of the sovereign of the seas and brother of Jupiter, the trident-bearer, Neptune; on the right was the Campus Agrippæ with the Vipsanian Portico. These two monuments terminate the first portion of the road, which, as already

[1] Cp. LANCIANI, *Forma Urbis*, Pl. 15 and 16.

[2] The mediæval designation of del Cacco (Macacco) was due to the figure of a cynocephalus, seated in its own peculiar attitude in front of the church. VACCA, *Memorie*, n. 27, in FEA, *Miscell.*, I, 67. Lanciani (*Bull. arch. com.*, 1883, p. 37) gives the Latin and Greek inscription at its base. Two cynocephali from the Temple of Isis were dug up in the neighbourhood in 1883 and placed in the Capitoline Museum.

explained, owed its embellishment to the Julian clan, and to Agrippa, the husband of Julia the daughter of Augustus.

The broad quadrangle of the **Portico of the Argonauts** reached northwards as far as the square on the Flaminian Way, in which the Column of Marcus Aurelius reared its head. This portico and the Basilica of Neptune which it encircled were works of Agrippa. Of this Basilica, also known as Poseidonion, we may still see the remains on the Piazza della Pietra, those eleven mighty pillars of the northern atrium which are such fine specimens of the Corinthian style. The other point of interest, the **Campus Agrippæ,** lying on the opposite side of the Flaminian Way, was a large green surrounded by porticoes, but of the purpose of which we know nothing. One distinct portion of it which bordered the Flaminian Way was known as the Vipsanian Portico, from the name of the founder, Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa.

Agrippa, to say nothing of his other merits and deeds, was not only a great builder, but also a zealous student of geography. It is thought that he had a good deal to do with the geographical and statistical determination of the Empire ordered by Augustus. There existed a large map of the world designed by him which probably was in the Vipsanian Portico, either engraved on marble or painted in colours.

## A Mithra-Cave in the Seventh Region

416. At the northern extremity of Agrippa's buildings there lay in the fourth century a much frequented Mithræum which deserves our attention.

The inscriptions discovered bear witness to the extraordinary zeal displayed there for this form of worship. Some of the stones bearing these inscriptions have been employed during the Middle Ages as material for building or decorating the adjacent church of S. Silvestro in Capite. Such a Mithraic inscription of the year 358 was even to be seen below the little choir where sacred relics were displayed. From these epigraphic texts we gather that the founder of this remarkable Mithræum was the *vir consularis,* Nonius Victor Olympius, who, in his quality of "father of fathers" (*pater patrum*) had himself performed his functions in this cave; we learn, moreover, that this superstitious

worship continued to be practised here till the seventies of the fourth century.[1]

Reception into these secret mysteries was very different from admission into the bosom of the Christian Church. We may as well interrupt the course of our topographical ramble to glance at this matter, and to institute a comparison between Christian baptism and initiation into the secret Eastern rites.

Mithra-worship in general simulated many Christian customs, and in particular it travestied the baptismal ceremony—that Christian sacrament of the New Birth—by certain superstitious and senseless rites. Tertullian already mentions with disgust how, in Mithra-worship, "the devil apes the Christian ritual." He states that sins are declared remitted after a certain form of baptism; that those about to be initiated are signed on the forehead; that there was an oblation of bread, whilst even a certain resurrection from the dead was preached.[2]

It is known that the revelation of the higher mysteries was delusively promised to those about to be initiated. It is also known that the candidate was admitted only after prolonged trial, and that the ceremony of initiation was accompanied by great excitement of the senses and imagination and a disgraceful stimulation of the passions. It was with good reason that Paulinus of Nola spoke of the "dark caves of Mithra." Quite different, on the other hand, was the ritual by which converts were admitted into the Christian Church. Here all was open and pure, and the aim of the entire service was to enlighten the mind by the assurance of certain truth, and to purify the heart by overcoming worldly feeling and concupiscence. The contrast between Christianity and Paganism is nowhere more striking than here.

According to the opinion of late Roman heathenism, the most effectual purification was to be obtained through the mock baptism of the **Taurobolium.**

The Taurobolium was closely knit with Mithra-worship. By sacrificing a bull and being sprinkled with its blood, Pagans hoped to secure pardon and purification from the "great Mother Cybele"

[1] The inscriptions in the *Corp. inscr. lat.*, VI., n. 749-754, No. 751[ab], were copied "*sub suggestu unde ostenduntur reliquiae.*"

[2] TERTULLIAN, *De praescr. adv. haer.*, c. 40. Cp. JUSTIN., *Apol.*, I, c. 66.

and from the god Attis. In this rite savagery and barbarism vied with most repulsive superstition.[1]

Prudentius, the contemporary poet, has left a sketch of this sanguinary baptism. He describes with loathing how the recipient of this rite is lowered into a pit covered over with a platform, latticed like a sieve; and how, when the blood of the slaughtered animal gushes down upon him from above, he eagerly smears the liquid over his whole body—even over his face and tongue. Prudentius depicts the man thus baptized emerging with his beard streaming and clotted with blood, while all present do him homage. At the end of his description he exclaims with contempt: "Lo, a dead beast has conferred radiant purity on the happy man in that evil-smelling hole."[2]

This was in many parts of the Empire the manner of performing the Taurobolium. Nevertheless outside Italy the actual bath of blood was often dispensed with, and in its place a special rite was undergone which insured participation in the graces of a real Taurobolium. Whole corporations, cities, and provinces in this simpler fashion could share in the virtues of a bath in bull's blood. It was, however, considered advisable to renew this ceremony every twenty years.

What is peculiar in these foreign rites is their frequent close connection with the heathen rites of Rome. The City of Rome, and particularly a spot on the Vatican close to St. Peter's Tomb, was the headquarters for these Taurobolia. The virtue of the superstitious baptism administered there was transmitted abroad. An inscription at Lyons proclaims that the testicles of the bull sacrificed in Rome had been sent to this city of Gaul that his efficacy might also be transmitted. The festival of the "Great Mother" and of Attis was celebrated in Rome from the 22nd to the 27th of March. In the calendar of Constantius, under March 28, we read: "Beginning of the Gaianum" (*Initium Gaiani*), a mention probably referring to the opening of that place of atonement hard by the Circus of Gaius and near the Vatican Hill. In this case the festival and rites of late Paganism would seem to have been purposely fixed at about the season when Christians were keeping the Feast of Easter or its preparation, and when, at

[1] PRELLER, *Röm. Mythologie* (1858), pp. 713, 739, 762. On the Taurobolium, see CUMONT, *Mysteries of Mithra*, p. 180 ff.

[2] PRUDENTIUS, *Peristeph.*, 10, v. 1011–1050; *P.L.*, LX., 520 ff.

the Lateran, baptism was about to be administered by the Bishop of Rome.[1]

These insulting circumstances connected with Mithra-worship and the Taurobolium sufficiently explain the outbreak of popular exasperation and violence in 377, during which the City Prefect Gracchus, with a mob of armed men, burst into and wrecked the caves of the devotees of Mithra.

Then, too, must the fate have been sealed of the Mithræum on the Flaminian Way near S. Silvestro in Capite—a sudden overthrow during which the great architectural structures of the neighbourhood were dumb witnesses of fierce and bloody scenes. The "Father of Fathers" in this Mithra-cave, with his hierarchy of "Persians," "heliodromes," and "lions," must certainly have learnt then that his day was long since past. Paganism proved by its own excesses during its decline that it was more than ever impotent to raise human nature either morally or mentally.

The church of San Silvestro, near the former Mithræum, does not call for any historical or topographical remarks, for it was not yet in existence in the sixth century. It was erected afterwards by Paul I. near his father's house, which he had transformed into the monastery of SS. Silvester and Stephen.[2]

## Second Part of the Via Flaminia within the City

417. Opposite San Silvestro a third arch crossed the Flaminian Way, the Triumphal Arch of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus. Farther to the left of the road the massive Column of Antoninus Pius and the *Ustrinum Antoninorum* at its foot arrested one's view; more to the south and nearer to our course, the Column of Marcus Aurelius rose triumphantly on the site it still occupies. This last monument was the most striking in the magnificent panorama.

The huge, renowned **Column of Marcus Aurelius**, the present colossal ornament of the Piazza Colonna, was erected as an imitation of Trajan's Column, shortly after the death of Marcus Aurelius in 180 (see vol. i., Ill. 36). With its winding band of bas-reliefs it soared above a vast court surrounded by porticoes.

[1] For the Lyons inscription and the Calendar, see PRELLER, ibid., p. 741.
[2] *Liber pont.*, 1, 464, *Paulus*, n. 260.

Like its fellow on Trajan's Forum, it could always be ascended by a staircase within. Like the other, too, its base is no longer visible, but has disappeared beneath the surface of the surrounding streets, the present false base being an addition made by Sixtus V. Upon the summit Sixtus placed a statue of St. Paul, to match that of St. Peter on Trajan's Column.

As we said, in the Middle Ages Trajan's Column had a chapel at its foot, which acted in some sense as its guardian. The Column of Aurelius had a similar sentinel in the little church of *S. Andreas de Columpna*, which subserved the neighbouring Basilica of St. Silvester. Hence there devolved on a Christian place of worship that duty of watching over the Column of Marcus Aurelius, which once in classical times had been bestowed upon a certain Adrastus. According to an inscription found here, Adrastus held the post and title of *procurator columnae centenariae divi Marci*, and had his lodgings close by the monument.[1]

The Column on the Flaminian Way is entirely covered with tolerably well-preserved scenes from the victories of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius over the Quadi and Marcomanni. The bas-reliefs are, however, less perfect artistically than those on Trajan's Column.

One of these may have been regarded by Christians with especial interest. It occupies a favourable position on the third round from below, facing the street. We allude to the bas-relief where a figure with broad, dripping wings represents that miraculous downpour which, accompanied by a fearful storm, saved the Roman army in Dacia from dying of thirst and from the assault of the enemy (Ill. 195). All Christians who had read Tertullian's *Apologeticus* would remember that that famous writer speaks of this rescue, and that both heathen and Christians ascribed it to the prayer of Christian soldiers belonging to the Legio fulminata, or Thundering Legion. Even earlier than Tertullian, the contemporaries Apollinaris, Bishop of Hierapolis in Phrygia, and Dio Cassius, the Pagan, are witnesses to this extraordinary incident, each, naturally, in his own style. The impartial representation of

[1] The inscription of Adrastus is in the Galleria Lapidaria of the Vatican. The *Columna centenaria* taken care of by Adrastus was 175 Roman feet in height, according to the Constantine Catalogue. In the portico of S. Silvestro in Capite may still be seen the inscription of 1119 concerning the rights of the monastery of St. Silvester over the "*columpna Antonini*" and the "*ecclesia S. Andree, que circa eam sita est.*" ARMELLINI, *Chiese*[2], p. 298, and FORCELLA, *Iscrizioni*, 9, 79, n. 149, for poor reproductions.

Ill. 195.—The Rain-Wonder as shown on the Column of Marcus Aurelius.

the scene on the Column is curious; it is equally deficient in Christian or heathen colouring; it is no Jupiter Pluvius who hovers as a saviour above the harassed soldiers rushing against the foeman's ranks—in fact, it is no heathen deity at all, and still less the Christian God, but merely a huge personification of Rain. The figure is indeed in striking harmony with the neutral and purely Platonic attitude which the "philosopher," Marcus Aurelius, ever observed towards the religions of the Empire.[1]

Most probably a *Templum divi Marci* was connected with the Column of Aurelius and the porticoes surrounding it, just as Trajan's Column had its *Templum divi Traiani*. About this we have, however, no certain knowledge.

But excavations and ancient topographical accounts concur as to the existence and situation of another twofold monument of the Antonines, namely the **Column of Antoninus Pius** and the Ustrinum or Crematorium. Both, as has been shown recently, were closely connected. The **Ustrinum** of the Antonines was intended for the cremation of the bodies of the family and to enclose the ornamental cinerary urns. In front of this stood the Column of Antoninus, with its wonderful sculptures as a trophy to his fame. The fragments of this column were found early in the eighteenth century in the garden of the Casa della Missione, and the great pedestal now graces one of the Vatican courts, where it does duty as a mount to the bronze pine-cone known as the Pigna. This mode of employment is a distinct humiliation, for the bas-reliefs on the superb work represent nothing less than the apotheosis of the Emperor Antoninus Pius, whose statue formerly looked down from the summit of the Column.[2]

Leaving the site of these monuments lying off our road, we reach the **Arch of Marcus Aurelius,** which crosses the Flaminian Way, and was separated only by a low hill, the present Monte Citorio, from the structures we have just visited.

The Arch of Marcus Aurelius has now disappeared, and the only reminder of it is a late inscription placed on the corner

[1] Our Illustration 195 is from the fine new work of Petersen (*Die Marcussäule*, 1897). Cp. *Civiltà catt.*, 1895, 1, pp. 716–724, *Il prodigio della legio fulminata.*. What has been written since on the story or on the reliefs has left my opinions unchanged. To the left are seen the Romans, to the right the slain or fleeing barbarians. In the background Roman soldiers are catching the rain in their shields. On the legend, see TERTULLIAN, *Apol.*, 5; *Ad Scapulam*, 4; APOLLINARIS in EUSEBIUS, *Hist. eccl.*, iv. 27; DIO CASS., lxxi. 8–10, ed. DINDORF, 1863, 4, p. 176.

[2] The inscription on the pedestal is in *Corp. inscr. lat.*, vi., n. 1004.

house of the Via della Vite. This informs us that, in 1662, Alexander VII. had demolished the arch, then known as Arco di Portogallo. This name the arch had borne since the time of Paul III., having obtained it from the adjoining residence of the Portuguese cardinal, Michael de Silva, the old palace of the Dukes of Fiano. The Triumphal Arch, originally erected in honour of the Emperor Hadrian, was later re-decorated and dedicated to Marcus Aurelius, the exploits and the family of this Emperor being glorified in the great bas-reliefs with which the structure was adorned.

Since the overthrow of the Triumphal Arch, portions of its great sculptured panels have been preserved, scattered in various places. For instance, any one visiting the Palazzo dei Conservatori on the Capitol would there find remains on the staircase inside, and the trained eye will easily recognise the recurring portrait of the philosophic Emperor. He will be seen taking part in the apotheosis of his deceased wife, Faustina the Younger; sitting lost in reflection in front of the burning pyre, from which a female genius with a burning torch in its hand ascends to the Immortals, among whom the Senate by a decree had placed the Empress. This sort of deification had become a custom and a need with the reigning families, a conception of glory encouraged even by the noblest representatives of Paganism, which contrasted strangely with the views of early mediæval Christians. Christianity had already imbued the whole vast Empire with entirely opposite doctrines, with its teaching of the importance of personality, and of the future reward awaiting the humble and meek.

### Third Part of the Via Flaminia within the City

418. The last portion of the Flaminian Way calls the visitor from Marcus Aurelius back to the Augustan age, for the splendid monuments, on the left hand of the Way at least, in the so-called Campus Martius, date from the grandest days of Rome.

First of all we see, quite near to the Arch of Marcus Aurelius, Augustus's Altar of Peace (*ara pacis Augustae*). Behind this, more to the left, towered the Augustan Obelisk, with the large sun-dial at its base. Further to the north, beside the Piazza Otto Cantoni, and close to the road, was the Ustrinum of the Augustan family, and still further back towards the Tiber, the

vast, lofty Mausoleum of Augustus, which commanded the whole district.

One who cared for art and humanity would probably have been attracted most by the first of the monuments, namely, by the **Altar of Peace.** It was erected in the year B.C. 13 to commemorate the Emperor's return from Spain and Gaul. The result of his martial exploits was a universal peace, and the Senate, desiring to celebrate this great truce, erected this huge altar to it.

The work displayed the highest perfection of sculpture. Scarcely any ornamental creation of antiquity excels in combined skill, grace, and power the bas-reliefs which decorate the surviving remains of this vast memorial altar. Since the ruin of the structure, its remains were unhappily dispersed in various directions. By studying them in connection with earlier copies, the design of the altar has, however, been made clear. The richly decorated altar stood in the open air, upon a square substructure with several steps, and inside a square enclosure of marble walls beautified by sculptured scenes.[1]

The monument attracted the notice of certain artists fairly early in the Middle Ages. An Umbrian school of sculpture, which devoted itself with singular success during the twelfth century to the study of classical ornaments, seems—if we are not mistaken—to have been much indebted to this marvellous creation, which at that time must have been still standing uninjured. Even Christian visitors who were not artists must often have paused before the Altar of Peace, and reflected how the state of universal peace on earth under that great sovereign prepared the way for the blessings of the Incarnation and Atonement. The Fathers often speak of the peace under Augustus as an evident work of Divine Providence. According to them, it was fitting that all nations should be united in the bosom of the Roman Empire in peace and friendship to show that all, like one vast family, were called to receive the blessings of the future Saviour.[2]

[1] Cp. Petersen's article on the *Ara pacis Augustae* in *Mitth. des arch. Instit.* (*Bullettino*, &c.), 1894, p. 171 ff. Since 1550 fine fragments of the monument have been found in the soil in the vicinity of the Palazzo Ottoboni-Fiano. Some, found in 1859, are still standing in the courtyard of the Palazzo; others are preserved in the Galeria degli Uffizii at Florence, in the Paris Louvre, and elsewhere.

[2] On the mediæval Umbrian school of sculpture of Meliorantius, see my article in the *Nuovo Bull. di arch. crist.*, 1 (1895), 42 ff., 127 ff., especially pp. 45 and 130.

The **Obelisk of Augustus** was a memorial of the Emperor's successful subjugation of Egypt.[1]

Many fragments of the obelisk and its famous sun-dial are preserved in the present new obelisk on the Piazza in front of the Palazzo di Monte Citorio, but the situation is not the old one, for the monument formerly stood much more to the north. It also had a large open space stretching northwards, on the pavement of which were cut the lines of the **Augustan Sun-dial**. The style or needle of the dial was the obelisk itself.[2]

At this spot, again, a Christian shrine attracts our attention. On the eastern side of the square, close to the boundary of the recently discovered outlines of the sun-dial, the church of **St. Lawrence in Lucina** was built as early as the fourth century. The origin is otherwise unknown, but Pope Damasus, who was consecrated in this church in 366, may have been responsible for its dedication to the saintly deacon Lawrence. Damasus was devoted to this Roman martyr, and it was he who dedicated to him the other church, called later St. Lawrence in Damaso. It may be that the fragment of a Damasian inscription dug up in 1872, near the church of St. Lawrence in Lucina, has an important historical bearing on this matter; but there is no proof that this inscription belonged originally to this spot; it might quite well have migrated thither from elsewhere, as is often the case with such fragments in Rome.[3]

Another church in this neighbourhood of the Flaminian Way, or Corso, retains the memory of the Mausoleum of Augustus (Ill. 196).[4] This is the church of S. Giacomo in Augusta. It was, however, only built during mediæval times in the gardens which formerly surrounded the grand sepulchre.

The greater part of the Mausoleum itself is still standing. In the middle it encloses an enormous circular building of

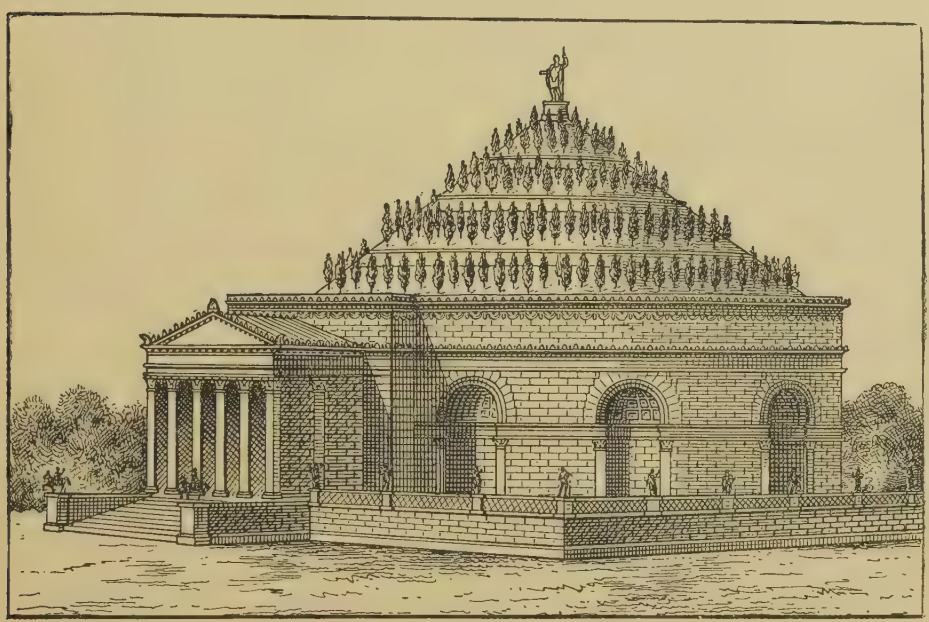
[1] The inscription upon the obelisk, erected in the year B.C. 10, says of Augustus and of this work: "*Ægypto in potestatem populi romani redacta soli donum dedit.*" *Corp. inscr. lat.*, VI., n. 702. The Egyptian obelisk dates from Psammeticus II., in the sixth century B.C.

[2] The present obelisk is composed of fragments of the ancient one and of the Column of Antoninus Pius. On the sun-dial, cp. PLINY, *Hist. nat.*, 36, c. 72, and the reports of the excavations in the *Corp. inscr. lat.*, l.c. According to these reports, there were "*varia signa coelestia ex aere artificio mirabili in pavimento circa gnomonem.*"

[3] On the fragment, see DE ROSSI, *Bull. arch. crist.*, 1872, p. 34, and Pl. 3, n. 3. It was found in 1872, during excavations at the left of the portico of the church. Several of the mortuary inscriptions dug up on the same spot had, however, evidently come from other places.

[4] From SCHNEIDER, *Das alte Rom*, Pl. 8, No. 14.

about the size of the *moles Hadriani*, the Mausoleum of Hadrian, on the other side of the Tiber. The tomb is a genuine *moles Augusti*, which, no doubt, stimulated Hadrian to surpass it in grandeur. The ascending tiers of marble supported at the summit a circular mound of earth, divided by terraces, and planted with cypresses and other shrubs, thus harmonising with the gardens, which stretched far to the north towards the Flaminian Gate. Two obelisks adorned the entrance on the south side. During the sixth century they were doubt-



Ill. 196—Mausoleum of Augustus. Partially reconstructed.

less still standing, but were later on thrown down and broken; later still they were rescued from oblivion and migrated to their present places—one to the Quirinal among the fountains before the Palace, the other to the Esquiline behind the apse of Sta. Maria Maggiore.

The gardens around the Mausoleum in the sixth century could scarcely have stood a comparison with their condition in the period immediately following Augustus. The first districts to feel the decline of Rome's fortunes must have been those which were not covered with buildings capable of defying assaults, and which were of no use for business or any other

practical purpose, but only served to embellish the City. We may also take it that plundering barbarians were specially attracted by the lavish splendour of the decorations, such as the valuable cinerary urns. The Mausoleum of Augustus contained urns with the ashes of Agrippa, Drusus, Germanicus, and of the Emperors Tiberius, Claudius, and Nerva, the last sovereign to be laid to rest here.

419. If the left side of the Flaminian Way, as it approached the outskirts of the Imperial City, was bordered with gardens, this was the case still more on the right side. On this side the Einsiedeln Itinerary mentions the **Parturium,** which is spoken of nowhere else. Beyond this, on the right-hand side, the only monument known is a lengthy, handsome, but nameless building, mainly composed of rectangular porticoes. To the south it perhaps comprised the site of the later church of St. Silvester, whilst to the north it reached beyond the present Via Frattina. In 1883 and 1886, in the latter street and in the Via della Vite, massive pillars of red granite from the East, and of Cipollino marble, were dug up, which must have formed part of this structure, and bear witness to its size and splendour; also blocks of peperino, slabs of divers kinds of marble for facing the walls, and other building materials showed the magnificence of the extensive buildings situated here. What name or what purpose they may have had is not easily decided. Andrea Palladio left a drawing of the remains, which were still to be seen in his day, and this sketch has been taken by Rodolfo Lanciani and others as proof of the existence at this spot of two connected pleasure-gardens surrounded by porticoes. The arrangement of certain gardens at Pompeii would certainly go to confirm this opinion. Christian Hülsen, on the contrary, sees in Palladio's sketch the plan of Aurelian's famous **Temple of the Sun,** which he locates here. The arguments for this view are indeed of weight, but how can we account for the absence of any testimony to the position of the far-famed Temple of the Sun in this part of Rome? How is it that on the supposed site of the temple there should exist no trace of masonry, but merely garden soil? And is any satisfactory answer forthcoming to the arguments by which the great Aurelian Temple of the Sun has always been located on

the south-western slope of the Quirinal, near the Baths of Constantine ?[1]

The Mausoleum of the Emperor Augustus was also the mighty pioneer of a whole array of other sepulchral monuments, which adjoined it to the north. They stood isolated among the gardens which fringed the Flaminian Way near the City boundaries, and belonged to a period previous to the erection of the Aurelian Wall.

Where now, at the end of the Corso, stand face to face the two churches of Our Lady, like two kindly sentinels on the road, two pompous tombs once stood on either side of the Flaminian Way. To the left was one in the shape of a pyramid, which, in mediæval times, was popularly called *meta*, like the pyramid of Cestius at the Ostian Gate. It remained there probably till the time of Pope Paul III. The opposite one, of which little is known, also had a large square base. The foundations of both were partly laid bare in 1874, when workmen were digging in the Piazza del Popolo.

Upon this fine piazza an Egyptian obelisk now rears its lofty head. As it was brought to this site from the Circus Maximus by Sixtus V., we shall not consider it here.

## The Surroundings of the Flaminian Gate

420. A visitor in ancient times following the straight line of the Flaminian Way through the Flaminian Gate would have perceived to the left, just outside the Aurelian City Wall, another sepulchral monument of huge size. Its inscription and reliefs are a striking memorial of the habits of Imperial Rome. The Einsiedeln Guide noticed it and copied the inscription, which extols the deceased, **Ælius Gutta Calpurnius**, as one of the greatest charioteers and jockeys of his time. His immortal victories are all registered in the lengthy text of the inscription ; the factions for which he won prizes are all named with painful precision ; even the names of the horses are engraved and immortalised with the rider ; five of the luckiest actually have their portraits graven in outline on the monument,

[1] Hülsen argues for the Temple of the Sun being on the Flaminian Way in the *Bull. arch. com.*, 1895, p. 39 ff., with Pl. 4. On the double garden, see LANCIANI, *Bull. arch. com.*, 1894, p. 285 ff. ; 1895, p. 94 ff. Lanciani deals with Palladio's sketch, of which he was the discoverer, ibid., 1894, p. 304, Pl. 12 f.

namely Palmatus, Danaus, Oceanus, Victor, and Vindex; the charioteer's quadriga also figures among the representations. This far-famed hero belonged to the time of the Antonines. The fate of his sepulchral monument was tragic. It seems to have existed down to the fifteenth century, when it was demolished. In 1877, when the two fortified towers flanking the Gate, and dating from Sixtus IV., were pulled down, remains of the vanished tomb were found built into the right-hand tower. When the tower was being erected, builders who had no respect for the exploits of Calpurnius had apparently made use of his mausoleum as material for their work. These remains, with their graven portraits, are now exposed in the town museum on the Cælius.[1]

The Einsiedeln Guide also preserves the text of another inscription which could formerly be read close to the Flaminian Gate. This did not belong to a tomb, but concerned municipal affairs, and made known a law of Marcus Aurelius regarding payment of **import dues.** The inscription proves that a whole century before the Aurelian Wall was built the urban boundary line, where these duties were levied, passed near this spot.[2]

The Imperial Mausoleum of the Domitians, near the Flaminian Gate, was also erected outside the City. It was another of the superb memorials crowning the north-west side of the Pincian Hill, and stood upon the rising ground immediately behind the present church of Sta. Maria del Popolo. The ashes of the **Emperor Nero,** who belonged to this family, were deposited here. The Romans of the Middle Ages, mindful of the fact that the cruel persecutor of the Church had found his last resting-place here, regarded it with a sort of uneasy dread. It was said that Nero's ghost was wont to quit its place of torment and to haunt this spot, showing itself and making itself heard. The late mediæval legend of the origin of the church just mentioned connects the building with Nero's dark memory and his restless ghost. It tells us how the desecrated spot demanded an act

[1] See inscription of the Einsiedeln MS. in *Corp. inscr. lat.*, VI., n. 10047 a.b.c., and in DE ROSSI, *Inscr. christ.*, 2, 1, p. 29, n. 59 ff. Cp. C. L. VISCONTI, *Delle scoperte avvenute per la demolizione delle torri della porta flaminia* (*Bull. arch. com.*, 1877, p. 184 ff.). LANCIANI, *Ancient Rome*, p. 215.

[2] *Corp. inscr. lat.*, VI., n. 1016 a. DE ROSSI, *Inscr. christ.*, 2, 1, p. 27, n. 50; p. 29, n. 57; id., *Piante di Roma*, p. 48.

of reparation, and how it was restored to calm only after the erection of this church of Our Lady by Paschal II.[1]

Most of the older Roman topographers agreed in placing the ancient Flaminian Gateway upon this slope of the Pincian Hill. This mistake was due to the misunderstanding of a passage in Procopius. The natural spot to seek for the Gate was at the end of the straight street, and in recent times this has been proved to have been the case beyond a shadow of doubt. While work was in progress at the Porta del Popolo in 1877, it became quite clear that this Gate occupied exactly the position of the ancient Flaminian Gate in the Aurelian Wall; and below the Porta del Popolo remains were even found of the original circular towers of the *Porta Flaminia*.[2]

421. The battlements of these Aurelian towers, or, better still, the heights near the Imperial Mausoleum of the Domitians, enable us to cast a glance back at the glories we have passed in the City and at the grand panorama beyond.

On the left the horizon is bounded by the terraced slopes of the Pincian Hill, with the gardens and buildings belonging to the Acilii, that Christian family whose acquaintance we have already made. Adjoining them also on the left of the picture, behind a great nymphæum at the foot of the Pincius, we see the long, picturesque series of arcades of the *Aqua Virgo* beginning its course into the City. Quite to the right, on the other verge of the City, beyond the Tiber and below the Vatican Hill, rises St. Peter's venerable Basilica, which then, as now, faces our vantage-ground, its front corresponding to its ancient form, that of a five-aisled Basilica. The wall above the atrium glitters in the sun with its great mosaics on a gold ground, visible from afar. To its left a keen eye might discern the slender spike of the Obelisk in the Circus of Gaius and Nero. On the same right bank of the Tiber our glance rests on Hadrian's Mausoleum, and then,

[1] Towards the end of the Middle Ages, however, a tower standing nearer the river was considered the spectre's haunt. The plan of Rome in Mantua marks there the "torre dove stette gran tempo il spirito di Nerone"; the plan in the Cod. Urbin., n. 277, belonging to the fifteenth century, also gives a "*turris ubi umbra Neronis diu mansitavit.*" Both plans were re-issued by DE ROSSI, *Piante*, Pl. 3, 6.

[2] Cp. Visconti's previously cited article. Jordan, in his *Topographie*, I, 1, p. 353, says: "It is certain that the ancient *Porta Flaminia* stood further east, on the slope of Monte Pincio." In Rome many such topographical questions have of late been thus settled by spade and pick. On the excavations on the Flaminian Way outside the City, see TOMASSETTI, *La Via Flaminia*.

travelling across the river, dwells in astonishment upon the buildings in the Campus Martius, of which the series begins with the Mole of Augustus.

We have alluded merely to the monuments in the vicinity of the Flaminian Way, disregarding a host of towering architectural structures on the level ground of the Campus Martius and in the ninth region lying to the west of the road, *i.e.* to our right. Among these were the Baths of Nero and of Alexander Severus. Their massive outlines seem to form a centre to this forest of masterpieces in stone. To the left the cupola of the Pantheon soars into space, while to the right extend the lofty, colossal walls and tiers of seats of Domitian's Stadium on the present Piazza Navona.

Before and behind this group temple-roofs, theatres, thermæ, gables of entrances to porticoes or gardens, mingled with columns, obelisks, triumphal arches, and cupolas of every kind, all rising towards the radiant southern sky, concealed, below, the superb porticoes with their fountains, shops, statues and other works of art.

It is true that at the time of our ramble all this showed signs of decay, but even in the sixth century the aspect of the Queen of the World still bore the stamp of beauty and grandeur impressed upon her. Looking down the majestic course of the Flaminian Way, with its triumphal arches, the eye was not confined as it now is to the narrow line of roadway. At that period it was possible to look over the monuments ranged on each side of the road both to the right and to the left. In the background, beyond the Saepta Julia, could be seen the frowning stronghold of the Capitol; below the Baths of Constantine was Trajan's Forum, while the Baths themselves could be discerned in all their enormous length seated on a projection of the Quirinal; behind these, on the Viminal and Esquiline Hills, lay a confused mass of houses and monuments, interspersed by gardens.

Quite humble is the appearance of the Christian Basilicas among all these buildings, while that of the monasteries is even humbler. The churches and monasteries of the great City were wont to lavish their own peculiar decorations on their interiors. Nevertheless St. Peter's, the Lateran, and a few other Imperial foundations were happy exceptions even in outward appearance.

These insignificant-looking churches and monasteries were,

Ill. 197.—Statue of Augustus, from Prima Porta.

(Now in the Vatican.)

however, to take possession in future ages of the inheritance of the classic world. The fallen Empire and the heathen Capital were dead for evermore. The vision of splendour over which our eyes have roamed was hopelessly doomed to vanish. The fate then overtaking the master-works of genius in this focus of the world's history deserves indeed to excite throughout all time the sympathy of mankind. Our only comfort is in the recollection that Providence preserved much of what was noblest and best in Rome and the ancient world, and transformed it for the good of humanity.

With what feelings, however, must cultured pilgrims from Germania on their visit to declining Rome have regarded the inscriptions and monuments on the *Via Flaminia*, which spoke of Rome's eternal rule over the world? Pilgrims from the North usually entered the City by this highway, and on their road they certainly had reason enough to compare things as they were with what they had been once. At the Mausoleum of Augustus the inscriptions on the bronze tables at the entrance glorified the Emperor as Conqueror of the World.[1] What had, however, become of the sceptre he wields so proudly on the well-known statue? (Ill. 197.) The pilgrims saw monuments of former triumphs of Rome over Gaul, Spain, Egypt, but now these countries obeyed other rulers. They saw the humbled figure of their own country Germania upon the Triumphal Arch of Marcus Aurelius, and again, in the Temple of Neptune, as a mourner among the statues representing the subdued provinces (Ill. 198).[2] If they were able here to recognise the Germanic features, it must have been even easier to perceive the Northern stamp on the faces of the prisoners and slaves portrayed in statuary (Ill. 199). But these Barbarians of the North were now beginning to impose their laws on the Roman world; what is more, they had already begun to combine Roman civilisation with Christianity, and, in addition, were displaying such life and energy, such determination and enterprise, as promised well for a new era of Christian civilisation.

[1] Augustus as Conqueror of the World, see the bronze inscription on the so-called "*monumentum Ancyranum*."

[2] On the portrayal of vanquished Germania, cp. *Annali dell' Istit.*, 1883, p. 8. Our Illustration 198 gives merely the upper portion of *Germania devicta*. Cp. BURCKHARDT, *Cicerone*[7], I, p. 137; BAUMEISTER, *Denkmäler des klass. Alterthums*, I, p. 251. On the Dacian, see ibid.

## Processions, Pagan and Christian, on the Via Flaminia

422. Formerly, in heathen times, solemn processions of people and priests passed down the Flaminian Way to celebrate the Robigalia in the open meadows outside the City. The object of these processions was to seek the protection of the gods for the crops to come. Their date was April 25, *i.e.* the same as that on which the Church celebrates the Feast of St. Mark.

The procession of people, clad in white, passing through the Gate, went along the Flaminian Way, through the fields to the flats near the Tiber. On the way it must have passed the heights of the Monti Parioli on the right, where the Christian cemetery of St. Valentine was excavated in the tufa rock as early as the third century. Further, it crossed the Milvian Bridge and entered the Claudian Way on the farther side of the Tiber. Near the fifth milestone on this road stood, venerated by the heathen, the grove sacred to Robigo, the god of frost, who, just at this season, could work damage to the fruits of the earth. Here the procession paused, and the Flamen Quirinalis sacrificed to the Canicula a brown dog and a sheep, after which races were run by youths and boys on the fine open ground.[1]

The Christian procession on St. Mark's Day was in some sense the outcome of this heathen custom, for as soon as the Pagan procession had fallen into disuse, or perhaps even in the time of its decline, the ceremonial described was adopted by the Roman Bishops, though, of course, it was carefully divested of its heathen character.

The ecclesiastical procession was held in honour of the true God, to implore, through the intercession of the Saints, His blessing on the harvest. The procession assembled inside the City, on the Flaminian Way, at the church of St. Lawrence in Lucina, and then took the ancient route described above, through the meadows. Thereby the Church sought to compensate the people for a cherished custom of their ancestors, and, at the same time, more effectually to withstand any surviving remnants of Paganism. Instead of songs of praise to the gods, the verdant pastures resounded with the Church's hymns, the Kyrie Eleison, and psalms.

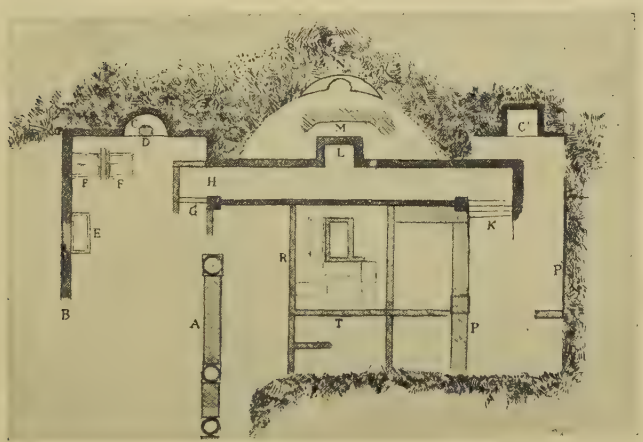
[1] BECKER, *Hdb. der röm. Alterthümer*, 4, 449 ff.

Ill. 198.—Mourning Germania.

(In the Loggia dei Lanzi, Florence.)

Ill. 199.—Dacian, from Trajan's Forum.

(In the Vatican.)




Ill. 200.—Portion excavated of the Cemetery-Basilica of St. Valentine on the Via Flaminia.

The procession halted at several points, partly to rest those taking part in it, partly to offer solemn prayers at the appointed places. The first stop was at the above-mentioned Cemetery of St. Valentine, below the Parioli, where a Basilica had stood since the period immediately subsequent to Constantine. Thence the march was continued as far as the Milvian Bridge, where a second stop was made. As soon, however, as the Tiber was crossed, the procession, avoiding the *Via Claudia*, followed by its earlier Pagan counterpart, turned first to the west, and then to the south, heading for St. Peter's through the plain at the foot of Monte Mario. A last halt was made at an Oratory of the Holy Cross standing on this road, after which the procession entered the Basilica of St. Peter, where the Station was held on this day, and where the Pope celebrated Mass. It may be that this particular route was not followed until after the sixth century, but there is no doubt that at a date not much later the procession took place as described. As to the procession itself, we shall not be far wrong in placing its origin in the fourth century.[1]

## St. Valentine's Church and Cemetery on the Flaminian Way. Recent Excavations

423. The Basilica of St. Valentine, situated behind the first milestone on the Flaminian Way, near this martyrs' cemetery, was erected by Pope Julius in the fourth century. During the first half of the seventh century the church was restored by Pope Honorius, and then reconsecrated by his third successor, Theodore.[2]

The church is especially mentioned in the itineraries of that century, which lay stress on its beauty and size. On account of the Saints there venerated, it stood in high esteem. "Going northwards through the City," says the Salzburg Itinerary, "thou wilt reach on the Flaminian Way the great

[1] PROBST, *Die röm. Sacramentarien*, p. 328 ff. The halting-places and prayers are given in the *Sacramentarium Gregorianum* of MURATORI (*Opp.*, ed. AREZZO, 13, 2, p. 618). On the stop at St. Valentine's, see MARUCCHI, *Il cimitero e la basilica di S. Valentino* (1890), p. 124. On the Oratory of Holy Cross, ARMELLINI, *Chiese*[2], p. 839.

[2] *Liber pont.*, I, 206, *Iulius*, n. 50: "*fecit cymiteria III., unum via Flamminea.*" *Coemeterium* here means a cemetery-basilica. *Itinerarium Salzburgense:* "*basilica magna, quam Honorius reparavit.*" In DE ROSSI, *Roma sott.*, I., 176. *Liber pont.*, I, 333, *Theodorus*, n. 128. Cp. MARUCCHI, work mentioned in previous note, p. 113 ff.

Basilica, restored by Honorius, where the saintly martyr Valentine rests; other martyrs, however, are buried underground farther to the north." In consequence of the presence of St. Valentine, the Flaminian Gate even changed its name, and as it led straight to the tomb of this Saint, it came to be called *Porta S. Valentini*. This once much-frequented shrine continued to enjoy high honour in the Middle Ages, when a flourishing monastery grew up on the hill above.[1]

When, however, during the thirteenth century, the body of the Saint was translated into the City to the church of Sta. Prassede, the ancient Basilica became deserted, and soon fell into decay, or was demolished.

Not until our day have its venerable remains again emerged from the earth and from the oblivion into which they had fallen. The discovery of the ancient Basilica and of the Christian catacombs pertaining to it, belongs to those incidents which can occur nowhere save in the Eternal City, to the surprise and joy of those who love Christian antiquity. The impression of such discoveries, with the finds daily disclosed during these excavations, can never be effaced from the minds of those who, like the present writer, were able to take part in them. A brief study of this important memorial will incidentally acquaint the reader with some particulars of value for the understanding of Roman manners.

As early as 1878, Orazio Marucchi, the Roman archæologist and pupil of de Rossi, identified the original sepulchral vault of St. Valentine, in the heart of the hill, amidst portions of the catacombs which had surrounded it. Until then the martyr's first burial-place had been wrongly located in certain passages lying higher up the hill. Ten years later, in 1888, the Basilica was at last discovered, and, moreover, on the very spot which the scholar just named had pointed out as the probable site of the church. At that time, while the new street,

[1] *Itinerarium Salzburgense*, l.c. Cp. *Epitome* in DE ROSSI, ibid.: "*iuxta viam Flamineam apparet ecclesia mirifice ornata S. Valentini martyris*," &c. I find the name *Porta S. Valentini* mentioned for the first time, though as already old, in the Bull of Marinus II. to Bishop John of Sabina, dated in May, 944. JAFFÉ, 2, n. 3626. It is printed in SPERANDIO, *Sabina sagra*, Docum. n. 6, p. 331, &c. MARUCCHI (p. 128) quotes other Bulls of 955 and 962 to the same effect. According to him, the name of Porta del Popolo came into use in the fourteenth century. "Popolo" here means the rural population which had settled among the gardens and fields of this district of the Flaminian Way.

the so-called Passeggiata Flaminia, was being laid, the trenches cut through the level in front of the hill-cemetery, and gradually there came to light the whole interior of the forgotten church, with its foundation-walls and pillar-bases, from the apse, built into the hill itself, down to the large atrium in front. A great deal of the space laid bare had to be filled in again, but the main part had been unearthed, and is shown upon the accompanying ground-plan (Ill. 200).[1]

The only portion not uncovered was the atrium itself. It formerly linked up the Flaminian Way with the church, and, owing to the distance from the road, must have been of unusual length. Here, it was, "*ad S. Valentinum in atrio*," according to our authority, that the procession on St. Mark's Day made its first pause. From this point, too, pilgrims coming from the north by the Flaminian Way usually thronged into the shrine, eager to visit the church of this martyr, the first of the Holy Places of Rome lying on their road.[2]

While the excavations were in progress the three aisles were readily recognised, for they were divided by the bases of great pillars which had mostly disappeared (Ill. 200, A). The nave, A, T, P, was about forty feet wide, but all its pillars had been thrown down. After a while there came to light remains of the earliest marble balustrades, Ionic capitals, and epitaphs of the fourth and fifth centuries, well-preserved portions of the original tesselated pavement, sculptured ornaments dating from the church's foundation and from later mediæval times, works belonging to different ages but all resting peaceably side by side beneath the earth. The left side aisle ended in a circular, the right in a square apse (C and $C^1$).

In front of the apse of the nave remains of two interesting constructions were visible: first, there were traces of the rectangular chancel usually found in Basilicas (*Schola Cantorum*), a raised platform in the middle of the nave (R, T). It rested on ancient graves, the inscriptions upon one of which dated from the time of Pope Julius I. Between the choir and the apse a long

[1] MARUCCHI, *Il cimitero di S. Valentino*, Pl. 4; KRAUS, *Gesch. der christl. Kunst*, I, p. 316.

[2] DE ROSSI, when speaking of St. Valentine and St. Zeno on occasion of the chapel of Zeno in Sta. Prassede, quotes from an Arezzo Codex the prayer used in the procession of St. Mark, which according to the rubric was pronounced "*ad S. Valentinum in atrio*," and which also contains the words: "*intercedente beato Zenone.*"

passage, once roofed over, and crossing the whole church, was found at a lower level (H). This was accessible from the right and left aisles by steps (G and K). This passage allowed of visitors approaching the substructure of the high altar (M), and had evidently, at one time, been lighted by lamps of which the niches were seen in the wall. It thus formed a species of transversal crypt, and is indeed one of the oldest in Rome. The passage had been constructed to enable visitors to draw nigh to the body of the martyr, for St. Valentine and his sarcophagus must have rested in the recess at the foot of the altar, and, no doubt, worshippers could both see and touch the tomb through a fenestella.[1]

424. If, as it is probable, the martyr's remains were removed here under Pope Honorius from his earlier tomb in the neighbouring hill, then the construction of this remarkable passage may also belong to the time of Honorius. The original burial-place in the hill proved too small and inconvenient for public worship. It was certainly this reason, and the wish to provide the neighbouring population with a place of worship, that led Julius I. to found the vast Basilica. Even afterwards reverence still induced people to mount to the tomb and the Catacombs in the rock, and we may still see the flight of steps leading thereto. In the immediate vicinity of the catacombs there stood also several heathen tombs.[2]

The Christian burying-places, kept distinct from the heathen, were in two groups. The more recent were inside and near the Basilica; the earlier, on the contrary, were near the martyr's tomb in the Catacombs. Even before Constantine five straight galleries had been excavated from the soft rock near where St. Valentine rested, and made into a cemetery. It was not until after Constantine, or indeed until after Pope Julius I., that Christians began to bury their dead in the Basilica, and later outside its walls and in the long fore-court. The burials in the latter place continued, so far as can be judged by the inscriptions, down to the sixth century,

[1] See reports of the excavations by MARUCCHI, *Bull. arch. com.*, 1888, p. 240 ff. and p. 429 ff., Pl. XIX. The latter is reproduced in his special work with some additions. Cp. MARUCCHI, *Röm. Quartalschrift*, 3 (1889), 15 ff., 114 ff., 305 ff.

[2] The existence of these tombs explains why the Basilica was not erected in front of the martyr's tomb, but at the side; the pagan burial-places had to be respected. Nor was it possible to build directly above the tomb, the hill being too steep and too high, and no space being left vacant.

*i.e.* until it had become customary to bury the dead within the City.

The Cemetery and Basilica of St. Valentine seem to have been subordinate to the titular church of St. Lawrence in Lucina, a dependence which would agree with the habit of putting cemeteries outside the City under the protection of the titular churches standing nearest to them within the walls. Among the numerous epitaphs found on this spot during the excavations was one belonging to a presbyter of the "title of Lucina."[1]

The Christian epitaphs found in the ground cut through for the new street amounted to about two hundred. The number would certainly be far greater had it been possible to reach those of the atrium. Examining the newly-gained epitaphs, together with the inscriptions still extant in the catacombs of St. Valentine, we find them to contain the usual touching profession of faith in a life to come, with an expression of fraternal sympathy with the deceased, and wishes for their repose beyond the grave. These stones bear striking witness to the belief in the intercession of the Church militant and of the saints in heaven.[2]

Another point of importance vouched for by these epitaphs is the worship of the saints, especially of St. Valentine. For instance, one of the tablets beseeches the Saint (*Domnus Valentinus*) to "refresh" the deceased, *i.e.* to intercede for his repose in the next world. Another inscription says: "May the glory of St. Valentine be granted thee." Pope Damasus, who did so much for the Catacombs, also placed an epitaph in honour of the martyr, though only a fragment remains of it.[3]

These inscriptions are often of importance on account of the historical information they convey. Thus one belonging to the fourth century contains the name of a certain Maximus, *Praepositus* of the Flaminian Way. The *Praepositus* was a high secular officer who, in consequence of the reforms introduced into officialdom under Diocletian and Constantine, took the place of the older *praefectus vehiculorum* of the Flaminian Way. This

[1] MARUCCHI, *Röm. Quartalschrift*, 4 (1890), 152.

[2] For inscriptions from these Catacombs, see MARUCCHI, *Cimitero e basilica di S. Valentino*, p. 70 ff.; for those from the cemetery above ground, ibid., p. 76 ff.

[3] ". . . *Refrigeret tibi Valentinus*," just as we find near other tombs of the Saints: "*Refrigeret tibi domnus Ippolitus*," or "*Refrigeret Ianuarius, Felicissimus, Agapitus.*" "*Addetur et tibi Valentini gl[oria s]ancti.*" Cp. MARUCCHI, *Bull. arch. com.*, 1888, p. 456, n. 56. For the Damasian fragment, see MARUCCHI, *Röm. Quartalschrift*, 2 (1888), 290, and in his special work, p. 120 ff.

road, on account of its importance for both war and trade, had always had a special traffic superintendent. The *praepositi cursuales* formed a special corporation (*militia*), and were therefore, on State occasions, allowed to wear the mantle (*chlamys*) fastened with the fibula upon the shoulder. Strange to say, a gold fibula was found near the inscription of Maximus, and also a gold reliquary or phylacterium, such as noblemen were wont to wear on their breast.[1]

Though the main part of the excavated church has been preserved for the future as a precious memorial of the early days of the Church's triumph, the Catacombs are disappointing on account of the dilapidation they have undergone. The owners (viz. the Hermits of St. Augustine at the Porta del Popolo) of a vineyard situated above the Catacombs, at a time when unhappily no reverence existed for such venerable spots, established their wine-cellars in the cemetery, and demolished almost all the early Christian tokens, and even the venerable pictures.[2]

About the tomb of this martyr pious tradition at an early date spun its customary legends. The story of Valentine's life and martyrdom has come to us in a very distorted version. The so-called acts of this martyr form a portion of those of the Persian martyrs—Marius, Martha, Audifax, and Abacum. "The whole is, however, so barbarous and disjointed that without a doubt it must date from a much later period, and belong to the sixth or seventh century, *i.e.* to a time when it was the rule to cast the stories of the martyrs into a legendary form, and to put together tales in which the same miraculous incidents constantly reappear."[3]

This much seems certain, viz. that St. Valentine suffered martyrdom under the Emperor Claudius II. (Goticus). Scarcely any more do we know of the martyr St. Zeno, who, as St. Valentine's

[1] This Christian epitaph of Maximus, the "*praepositus de via flabinia*," was found on the reverse of a Pagan epitaph. It was not known before that such an office existed for the Flaminian Way. See MARUCCHI, *Röm. Quartalschrift*, 4 (1890), 152, and DE ROSSI, *Del praepositus di via flaminia* (*Bull. arch com.*, 1888, p. 257 ff.), who points out that the position of this *praepositus* must have been entirely different from the ecclesiastical office of the *praepositus basilicae S. Valentini*. An epitaph of the year 404 is also interesting; it belongs to a certain Jovianus "*nutritor et papas trium fratrum*." MARUCCHI, *Cimitero*, &c., p. 85. "*Papas*" is the title which ultimately was reserved to the Popes alone, to distinguish their fatherly dignity.

[2] MARUCCHI, *Cimitero*, &c., p. 43 ff. Cp. p. 67: "gli ambulacri barbaramente tagliati," &c.

[3] MARUCCHI, *Röm. Quartalschrift*, 3 (1889), 17. See the Acts, in *Acta SS.*, II., Febr. p. 753.

companion in death, was venerated with him at the place we have just described, and whose name was found on a marble tablet inside the Basilica. St. Zeno and St. Valentine were invoked in the ancient litany sung in the procession to this place on St. Mark's Day.[1]

## Christian Cemeteries Outside the Walls

425. The Christian Catacombs, which, from the first had been so dear both to the people of Rome and to pilgrims, during the long-drawn Gothic wars were exposed to great danger. Not only had they to suffer at the hands of the enemy, thus calling for the frequent restorations of which we have already seen instances in the history of Pope Vigilius, but also, owing to the insecurity of the country about Rome, the faithful were little by little obliged to cease visiting them.

As already noticed, no interments took place in the Catacombs after the time of Alaric's siege of Rome. Christian Rome then began to bury her dead in graveyards situated near or above the Catacombs, where churches, great and small, were erected after the pattern of St. Valentine's Basilica. The cemeteries were resorted to partly to offer prayers for the faithful departed, partly to do honour to the martyrs there reposing. Many bodies of martyrs, buried at an inconvenient depth, were about this time brought up to the surface and placed in oratories and churches standing above their tombs.

Owing to the misfortunes of the age, in the sixth century the custom already alluded to grew up in Rome of burying the dead within the City walls, an innovation contrary to ancient Roman practice and law. In consequence, cemeteries outside the walls began to fall into disuse, another fact which explains why the Christians ceased to visit them. By the populace the Catacombs were usually called "cemeteries of the martyrs," though by far the majority of those buried in them were ordinary Christians, the martyrs being the exception. The underground burial-places,

[1] For the date of Valentine's death, DE ROSSI, *Roma sott.*, III., 212. ALLARD, *Hist. des persécutions*, 3, 196 ff. For the inscription of Zeno, probably belonging to the tenth century, see MARUCCHI, *Cimitero*, p. 125.

once so well attended, even stood in danger of being deprived of the liturgical ministrations of the clergy.[1]

It was Pope John III. (561–574), that noble Roman, who took steps to insure that these venerable cemeteries should retain their position amidst the places of worship of the City. The *Liber pontificalis* begins the sketch of his life with the brief but significant words: "He cherished and restored the cemeteries of the holy martyrs. He enacted that the Lateran should, each Sunday, supply the cemeteries with the oblation, the wine, and the lights." This seemingly unimportant regulation of Pope John, as de Rossi says, really marks an epoch in the history of the cemeteries of Rome.[2]

Pope John's enactment was observed for more than two centuries, during which it was the rule to celebrate a Sunday Mass in each of the churches erected over cemeteries. The priest was sent from the titular church to which the cemetery was subordinate, and the necessary materials were supplied by the Lateran, the head of all the titular churches of Rome. The *arcarius* and the *vestararius* of the Pope, had to see that all was carried out aright.

Thereby, not only was service in the Catacombs prevented from dying out, but, at the same time, the rural population in the neighbourhood was afforded the opportunity of attending the liturgy on Sundays. In the previous wars, no doubt, observance of such duties had slackened. At the time of Pope Gregory I. (590–604), for instance, we learn that each Sunday a priest had to celebrate Mass in the church on the hill above the cemetery of St. Pancras on the Aurelian Way, and we shall not be far wrong in supposing that the priest belonged to a neighbouring title-church, situated below the hill near the Gate, *i.e.* to S. Crisigono, Sta. Cecilia, or Sta. Maria in Trastevere.[3]

426. It was in the nature of things that the service of the Catacombs and their supervision were, from the earliest times, so

[1] The designation of "*coemeteria sanctorum martyrum*," which became more and more customary (see next note), certainly contributed to the idea prevalent in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, that the Catacombs were full of bodies of martyrs.

[2] *Liber pont.*, I, 305, *Iohannes III.*, n. 110: "*Hic amavit et restauravit cymiteria sanctorum martyrum. Hic instituit ut oblationem et amula vel luminaria in easdem cymiteria per omnes dominicas de Lateranis ministraretur.*" Ed. MOMMSEN, p. 157. DE ROSSI, *Roma sott.*, I., 218 ff.; III., 515 ff.

[3] GREGOR., *Registr.*, 4, n. 18; JAFFÉ, n. 1290. According to this letter, the presbyter failed to attend to his duty, and Gregory had to make other arrangements.

distributed among the Roman *Tituli* that each catacomb depended on the nearest titular church. From the first, each parish established its cemetery as near as possible, *i.e.* outside the nearest City gate. The care and direction of these cemeteries naturally remained in the hands of the respective titular priests. That, among all the Catacombs, one, and this the most important of all, belonged to the whole Christian community as a body can easily be explained. This was the Catacomb of Callistus, where the Popes were buried during the third century. This catacomb stood under the Pope's own clergy, and was managed by the "Archdeacon of the Apostolic See."

The service of the titular clergy in the cemetery-churches assumed greater proportions in the three most important Basilicas lying beyond the walls, *i.e.* in St. Peter's, St. Paul's, and St. Lawrence's, all three of which were cemetery Basilicas, which, however, on account of the influx of Roman Christians and of foreign pilgrims, required to be placed on a special footing.

Hence, as early as Pope Simplicius, services throughout the week were introduced in these three Basilicas, and were carried out by duly appointed *Tituli*, the titular priests being aided, especially in the choral services, by monks from the monasteries in the immediate vicinity of these Basilicas. After Pope Simplicius, at St. Peter's there were priests in weekly residence from the *Tituli* of the sixth and seventh ecclesiastical Regions; at St. Paul's others from the first Region, and at St. Lawrence's priests from the third Region. Though the limits of these ecclesiastical Regions are little known, owing to want of authoritative information, it is certain that the Regions just enumerated lay quite close to the three great Basilicas assigned to them. Hence we find here at these cemetery Basilicas the same system initiated by John III., by which each cemetery outside the walls was looked after by the title-church nearest to it.[1]

What is rather remarkable is that this system was retained till late in the Middle Ages, in spite of all the changes which occurred.

We see this from what Peter Mallius says. In the twelfth

[1] *Liber pont.*, I, 249, *Simplicius*, n. 72: "*Hic constituit ad sanctum Petrum apostolum et ad sanctum Paulum apostolum et ad sanctum Laurentium martyrem ebdomadas, ut presbyteri manerent, propter penitentes et baptismum: regio III ad sanctum Laurentium*," &c.

century he mentions the seven Cardinal-priests who had in turn to perform the services of the week day by day in the three Basilicas, St. Peter's, St. Paul's, and St. Lawrence's. These "Cardinal-priests" are really the ancient titular priests, to whom, by his time, the name of "Cardinals" had come to be applied. Among the seven Cardinals officiating at St. Peter's, according to his list, no fewer than five still belonged to *Tituli* in the sixth and seventh Regions, *i.e.* to the very Regions appointed for this by Pope Simplicius. Among those of St. Paul's there were certainly four, and possibly five, from the first Region as appointed by Simplicius. Only at St. Lawrence's had there been any great alteration, and for this we can readily give a reason. A similar weekly duty by titular priests or Cardinals had been also introduced at the Basilica of Sta. Maria Maggiore, which stood quite near the Gate of St. Lawrence, and the consequence was that several titular churches, which had hitherto supplied at St. Lawrence's, were brought into the service of the more distinguished church of Sta. Maria Maggiore. This explains the change in the clergy officiating at the former church.[1]

The service in these important churches continued to be provided for exactly in accordance with the practice which had prevailed with respect to the earliest cemeteries, and it was only the prolonged sojourn of the Popes at Avignon which made an end of this ancient custom, as it did of so many other traditional usages of the Christian Capital.[2]

The arrangement made by John III., after the Gothic Wars, for the orderly celebration of the Holy Sacrifice in the Catacombs must accordingly be considered as a simple evolution of what had gone before, as a step by which worship in the Catacombs again became what it had been formerly, *viz.* an integral part of the life of the Roman Church. His measure was for a long while effectual in protecting from negligence and decay those subterranean shrines, which are so full of interest for Christians, whether Romans or pilgrims to Rome, though ultimately they too had to undergo the common fate.

[1] PETRUS MALLIUS, *Acta SS.*, t. 7 Iunii, p. 46*, n. 134. Cp. DUCHESNE, *Liber pont.*, I, 250, note 5. The five cardinals of St. Peter's were those of the Titles of S. Maria Transtiberim, S. Chrysogonus, S. Cæcilia (of the seventh Region), S. Laurentius in Damaso and S. Marcus (both Tituli of the sixth Region). The four cardinals of St. Paul's were those of the Titles of the first ecclesiastical Region, viz.: S. Sabina, S. Prisca, S. Balbina, SS. Nereus and Achilleus, and in addition S. Xystus.

[2] DE ROSSI, *Roma sott.*, III., 528 ff.

Ill. 201.—Pope Xystus II. and Bishop Optatus.

(Picture in the Catacomb of Callistus, from the time of John III.)

427. John III., "who cherished and restored the cemeteries," also deserves well for his embellishment of them. The still existing portraits of two martyred Popes and two African Saints on the walls of the Crypt of St. Cornelius, in the Catacomb of Callistus, belong to his period. Upon one fresco we see the grave and dignified figures of Pope Xystus II. and Bishop Optatus (Ill. 201),[1] and upon the other those of Pope Cornelius and Bishop Cyprian. Upon the former we read the words of Psalm lviii., which sound like a hymn of thanksgiving for help received during the trials which John III. and his time had experienced: "But I will sing thy strength and will extol thy mercy in the morning: for thou art become my support and my refuge in the day of my trouble." The four figures, all dressed exactly alike, wear the same costume as Senators were wont at that time to wear in everyday life, and when not actually engaged in public functions. We can distinguish their sleeved tunics, with the dalmatic over it and the *pænula* or planet. But the most striking vestment is the broad white stripe of the woollen pallium with its black cross; this is passed round the neck and looped, so that one end hangs down in front and the other behind. Their figures all display the great tonsure, and in their arms they hold the Book of the Gospels set with precious stones.[2]

It may be that the whole restoration of this crypt was due to Pope John III. Our illustration 202 [3] shows it in the state in which de Rossi discovered it in 1852, and among other things includes the column stump which formerly supported the altar-table, or upon which the lights before the Saint's tomb floated in a vessel of oil.

## The Catacomb of Prætextatus

428. John III. seems to have lavished special care on the Catacomb of Prætextatus. When, during the regency of Narses,

[1] WILPERT, *Katakombengemälde*, Pl. 256, and *Un capitolo di storia del vestiario*, in *L'Arte*, 1898, p. 105. The saints depicted are described as follows: SCS SVSTVS PP ROM. SCS OPTAT. EP. On the pallium worn by both Bishops, see present work, vol. ii. p. 295, note 1. Wilpert believes the painting to belong to the time of John III.

[2] According to Wilpert, the inscription on the fresco runs: † EGO AV[TEM] CANTABO BIRTVTEM TVAM ET EXALTABO MANE MISERICORDIAM TVAM QV[I]A FACTVS SET (for *est*) SVSCEPTRO (for *susceptor*) MEVS ET REF[V]G[IVM] MEVM I[N] DI[E TRIBVLATIONIS MEAE].

[3] DE ROSSI, *Roma sott.*, I., Pl. 5. The epitaph of Cornelius (shown in vol. i., Ill. 72) is seen on Ill. 202, just beyond the column stump.

new troubles arose through a quarrel between the City and its Governor, John withdrew for safety to the Cemetery of Prætextatus. "He dwelt there," so the *Liber pontificalis* informs us, "for a long while, and even consecrated Bishops in it."[1]

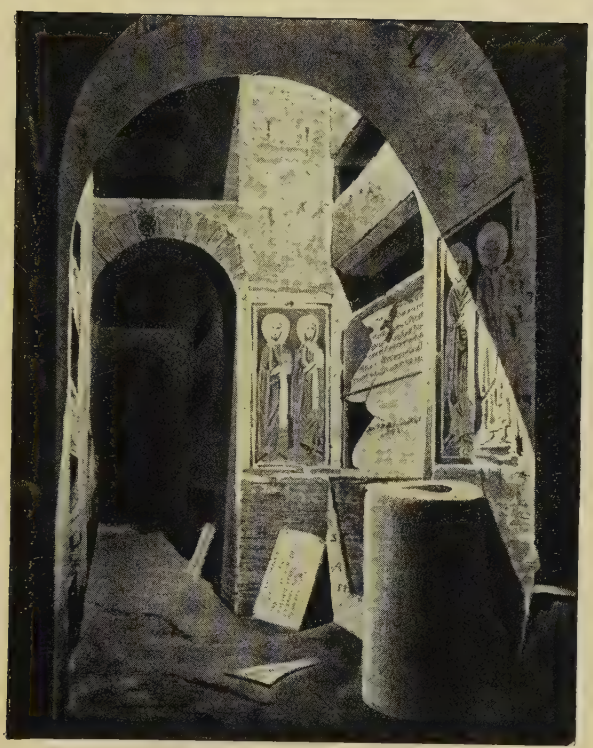
Naturally we need not imagine him living underground, for a cemetery also included all the buildings above the corresponding Catacombs, and these sometimes comprised dwellings of considerable number and size besides churches and oratories. As a matter of fact, over the Catacomb of Prætextatus there still exist many remains of church-buildings belonging to a period subsequent to Constantine, and perhaps to the sixth century, among them a ruined hall with high vaulted niches, which must have been in the shape of a Greek cross, and which consequently resembled in plan the church in Rome which John III. had dedicated to the Apostles.

Besides, in the immediate neighbourhood of the Christian Catacombs, there were also some ancient villas, which might have afforded shelter to the fugitive Pope.

The Catacomb of Prætextatus and its grand surroundings are in some measure calculated to supply our fancy with a picture of the former state of things in a place which was at one and the same time a favourite shrine and a centre of classicism. Both influences strike the memory, and even the eyes of a modern visitor, early Christianity and its worship, and the lavish pomp of Pagan times, for there are but few sites where the monumental and spiritual contrasts of Rome are as sharply opposed as here. Long before the mansions and fine gardens of this district had begun to fall into ruin—indeed, while they were still in the fulness of their pride—the honoured martyrs of the New Religion were already resting in the bowels of the earth, in the underground cemeteries excavated by the Christians almost under the very villas themselves; their religion had already received the call to take over the inheritance of the former masters and to continue their glorious tradition, though in a new and higher sense.

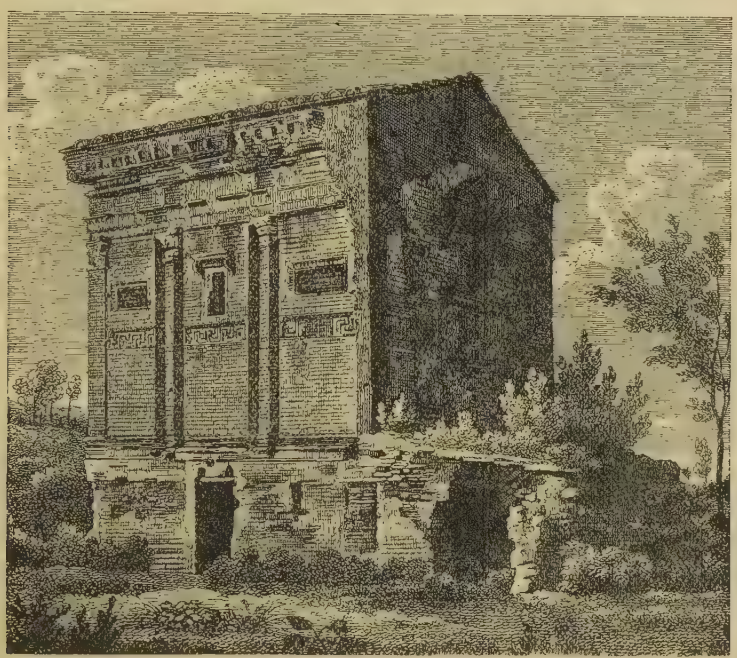
The Saints in the Catacomb of Prætextatus slept in one of the finest and most memorable spots in the vicinity of Rome.

[1] *Liber pont.*, I, 305, n. 110: "*Tunc sanctissimus papa retenuit se in cymiterio SS. Tiburtii et Valeriani et habitavit ibi multum temporis, ut etiam episcopos ibidem consecraret*," &c. These two saints had a small church above the Catacomb of Prætextatus, which is mentioned in the Itineraries of the seventh century. DE ROSSI, *Roma sott.*, I., 180, 181. On the site of the Catacomb, cp. DE ROSSI, *Bull. arch. crist.*, 1872, p. 47 ff.



Ill. 202.—Crypt of St. Cornelius in the Catacomb of Callistus.

The Cemetery lies to the east of the Appian Way. Any one strolling from the Basilica of S. Sebastiano on this road, towards the church of S. Urbano, will have it on his left. He will see the horizon bounded by the smiling Alban heights; to the right stands the majestic heathen circular Mausoleum of Cæcilia Metella; in the hollow stretches the Circus of Maxentius with its endless encircling walls; quite close rises the beautifully



Ill 203.—The so-called Temple of Deus Rediculus on the Via Appia.

Specimen of a heathen mausoleum. From an old engraving by Parboni.

constructed heroon of his son Romulus, making a fine foreground to the scene.

The church of S. Urbano itself, which looks down from the opposite hill on the peaceful cemetery, is an ancient pre-Christian building. It formed part of the extensive estate of Herod Atticus, and was the temple, or perhaps the mausoleum, of Herod's wife, Annia Regilla.

Herodes Atticus was one of the tutors of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus. The country house he laid out upon this property was connected with the Pagus Triopius, a farm settlement. The

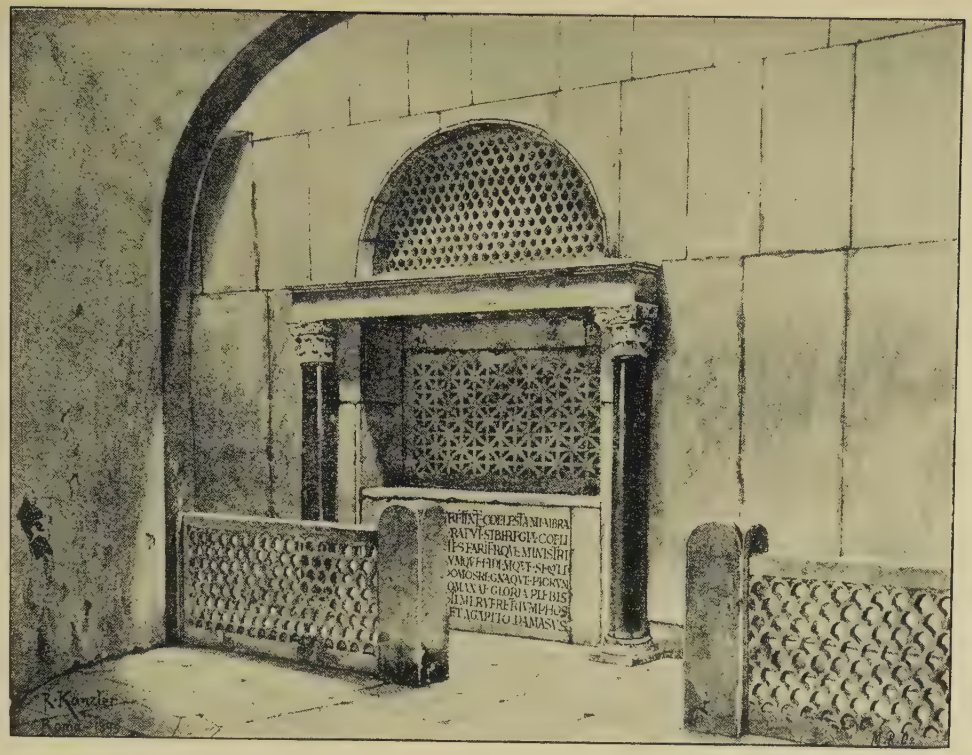
fine buildings of the villa stood nearer to the right and were bounded by the *Via Appia*. A superb row of cipollino pillars here formed a sort of hedge. More to the left, nearer Rome and the lovely little vale of Caffarella, lay the centre of the underground Christian burial-places. The sleepy rivulet flowing through the valley was given the name of Almo, and a well-preserved ancient cave is known as the cave of the nymph Egeria. Upon the hill picturesquely crowned with evergreen oaks, opposite S.

Ill. 204.—Fresco in the Catacomb of Prætextatus. The Seasons.

Urbano, the eye of the people sees a "sacred grove" (Bosco Sacro), while the brick mausoleum (Ill. 203) lying to the north adopted the high-sounding name of Temple of Deus Rediculus. Although all these titles may be historically untenable, they help to grace a spot owing its charms as much to its monuments and memories as to its natural beauty.

429. There is also no certainty as to how this cemetery took the name of Prætextatus, or who this person was.

The first saint buried in this Catacomb would seem to have



Ill. 205.—Tomb of SS. Felicissimus and Agapetus in the Catacomb of Prætextatus.

(Reconstruction.)

been the Tribune Quirinus, who suffered martyrdom with his daughter Balbina. His death is dated in the reign of Hadrian. Some thirty years later, the Martyr Januarius, one of the sons of the holy matron St. Felicitas, also found a resting-place here. The tomb of Januarius, of which the large epitaph placed there by Damasus was found by de Rossi (vol. i., Ill. 79), strikes the modern visitor as the most important in this Catacomb, and its crypt is especially interesting on account of its mural paintings (Ill. 204).[1] In this same cemetery, later on, the martyrs Valerian, Tiburtius, Maximus, and Bishop (Pope?) Urban, to whom the church just mentioned was dedicated, all known through the story of St. Cæcilia's martyrdom, were also buried, as well as several other victims of the same persecution.

Here, too, under the Emperor Valerian, took place the arrest of Pope Xystus II., who was seized while celebrating the Liturgy, and then done to death on his stone cathedra in the Catacomb of Callistus. His deacons Felicissimus and Agapetus, as well as some of the lower clergy who were martyred at the same time, were also buried in these galleries. The tomb of these two deacons, with its porphyry pillars and marble balustrades, and of which the inscription by Damasus is well known, has been reconstructed as it was (Ill. 205).[2] Round about these saints innumerable Christians had their burial-places in the galleries of the cemetery.

Such was the Catacomb which Pope John III. doubtless did his best to preserve, and above which he sought refuge when driven from the Lateran.

[1] Our Ill. 204 is from GARRUCCI, *Arte crist.*, Pl. 37, No. 1. Cp. DE ROSSI, *Bull. arch. crist.*, 1863, p. 4; KRAUS, *Gesch. der christl. Kunst*, 1, p. 205 ff.; and the photo in WILPERT, *Katakombengemälde*, Pl. 31, No. 2.

[2] On Ill. 205, see ROD. VON KANZLER, *Restituzione architettonica della cripta dei SS. Felicissimo ed Agapito* (*Nuovo Bull. arch. crist.*, 1, 1895), p. 172 ff., Pl. 9 f. The pillars and marble balustrades still exist, and all the decorations are retained in fragments. The inscription has been preserved in old copies (DE ROSSI, *Inscr. christ.*, 2, 1, p. 66):—

"*Aspice et hic tumulus retinet celestia membra*
*Sanctorum, subito rapuit quos regia celi.*
*Hi crucis invicte comites pariterque ministri,*
*Rectoris sancti meritumque fidemque secuti,*
*Etherias petiere domus regnaque piorum.*
*Unica in his gaudet romane gloria plebis,*
*Quod duce tunc Christo Christi meruere triumphos.*
*Felicissimo et Agapito Damasus.*"

## The Earliest Churchyards within the City

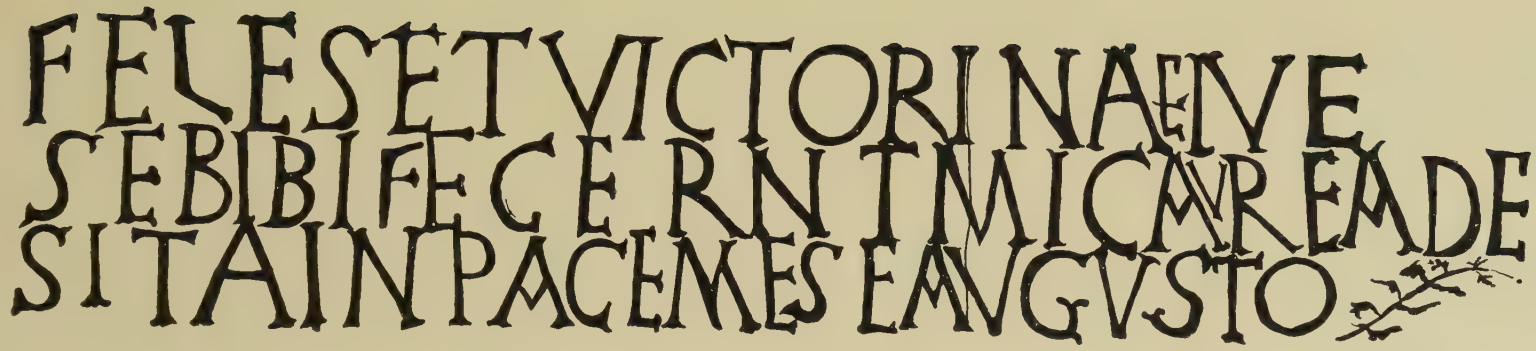
430. Returning now to the City, we seek the earliest Christian Churchyards. We shall find that they do not date much further back than the time of John III., and in a general way we may say that intra-mural burial was introduced as an abiding practice during his pontificate.

As it happens, the last dated epitaph from the extra-mural cemetery of St. Callistus belongs to 560, the year before John's election, and is a sign that from that time burial outside the walls ceased to be the rule. To his pontificate, in the year 567, also belongs the most ancient dated inscription from a cemetery within the City, that, namely, from the graveyard on the Esquiline between the Baths of Diocletian and the church of St. Eusebius. The epitaph was discovered in 1691 *in situ* between Christian graves laid bare in what was then the Villa Peretti, and later the Villa Massimi. The recent excavations during the building of the new quarter on the Esquiline brought to light other very ancient epitaphs from this same great cemetery.[1]

In this neighbourhood lay formerly a number of extensive gardens, among which the splendid *Horti Maecenatis* and *Horti Lamiani* are known by name. This district of Rome, which had never been built over, seemed in a later age peculiarly suited for the construction of graveyards.

When the famous Caius Cilnius Mæcenas laid out his gardens here, he found numerous *puticuli* or grave-pits in which the dead were herded. These pits lay just outside the Servian Wall, and were consequently not within the ancient City. As their stench was a nuisance to the whole neighbourhood, Mæcenas had them buried beneath a deep layer of soil, above which he established gardens of which the charm and profusion formed a curious contrast with what was below the surface. One conservatory belonging to these gardens is still preserved, and probably marks the centre. This building, adorned with frescoes, was unearthed during the excavations on the Esquiline just alluded to. We can still see how it was partly supported by the masonry of the Servian Wall which

[1] On the last burials in the Catacomb of Callistus, see DE ROSSI, *Roma sott.*, III., 557. The find in 1691 was made in the "*hortis Perettianis nunc Negronianis*" (later Villa Massimi), see DE ROSSI, l.c., I., 218, from BLANCHINUS, *Anastasii Vitae pontiff.*, 3, 300; also GATTI, *Bull. arch. com.*, 1889, p. 392.




Ill. 206.—Specimen of Sixth-century Epigraphy. Epitaph from the Cemetery in Mica Aurea, near San Cosimato.

passed by it. It is usually known now as the *Auditorium Maecenatis*.[1]

Thus a Christian graveyard and a church of St. Eusebius took possession of the decayed glories of these gardens, and the site again was used for the same purpose as previous to the improvements introduced by Mæcenas. The Christian manner of burial was, however, something immeasurably more honourable and dignified than that of the heathen period. It was in keeping with the dignity of man which the Church preached. The sepulchres, even of the poorest, were no longer pits into which the bodies were cast one upon the other, but narrow, cleanly, single tombs, usually built of brick, covered with a roof, and resting just below the surface of the soil. High and low received the same funeral-blessing, and the last liturgical greeting of the Church so beautifully expressed in her prayers for everlasting peace, the *pax* of the other world.

On the occasion of the station in the ancient *Titulus* of St. Eusebius—then to all intents and purposes a cemetery-church—which is still marked in the Roman Missal for the Friday after the fourth Sunday in Lent, the Gospel dealt, as it still does, with the Raising of Lazarus. The reason for the choice of this Gospel, though at first sight not clear, is soon understood if we call to mind the surroundings of this station in ancient times. The procession on its way to Mass at the station-church of St. Eusebius had to cross the broad and perhaps most fashionable cemetery of Rome. What, then, could be more in keeping with the allusiveness beloved of the Liturgy than that the deacon should chant the words spoken by our Lord to Martha: "I am the Resurrection and the Life," and to her brother Lazarus: "Lazarus, come forth"—that mighty word of which the fulfilment in Lazarus contains a happy promise for all Christians?

431. Another Christian place of burial in Rome existed within the former Prætorian Camp, and is even slightly older than the last. This cemetery may date back to the time of Theodoric. This we may gather from the brick-stamp of this king, which was found in one of the Christian graves there. In 1863 early

[1] The laying out of the Mæcenas Gardens is described by HORACE (*Sat.*, lib. 1, c. 8): "*Huc prius angustis eiecta cadavera cellis*," &c. Cp. NIBBY, *Roma antica*, 2, 339. For the so-called *auditorium Maecenatis*, cp. C. L. VISCONTI, *Bull. arch. com.*, 1875, p. 137 ff., with plates. It stands at the junction of the Via Merulana and Via Leopardi.

Christian burial-places were again found in the small buildings once occupied by the Prætorians.[1]

The Prætorians had been disbanded under Constantine the Great. Their camp, the enormous square enclosure within the City Wall between the *Porta Nomentana* and the *Porta Tiburtina*, no doubt continued even later to be used by the military. In the fourth century no interments had taken place there, but towards the end of the fifth century, and during the Gothic period, the site may well have been selected for such purposes. This field, almost cut off from the City by its walls, and projecting from the fortifications of the City, may have been chosen as a natural and easy transition from extra-mural to intra-mural burial.

Even that part of the City lying on the right bank of the Tiber had, in the latter years of the sixth century, its Christian cemetery within the walls.

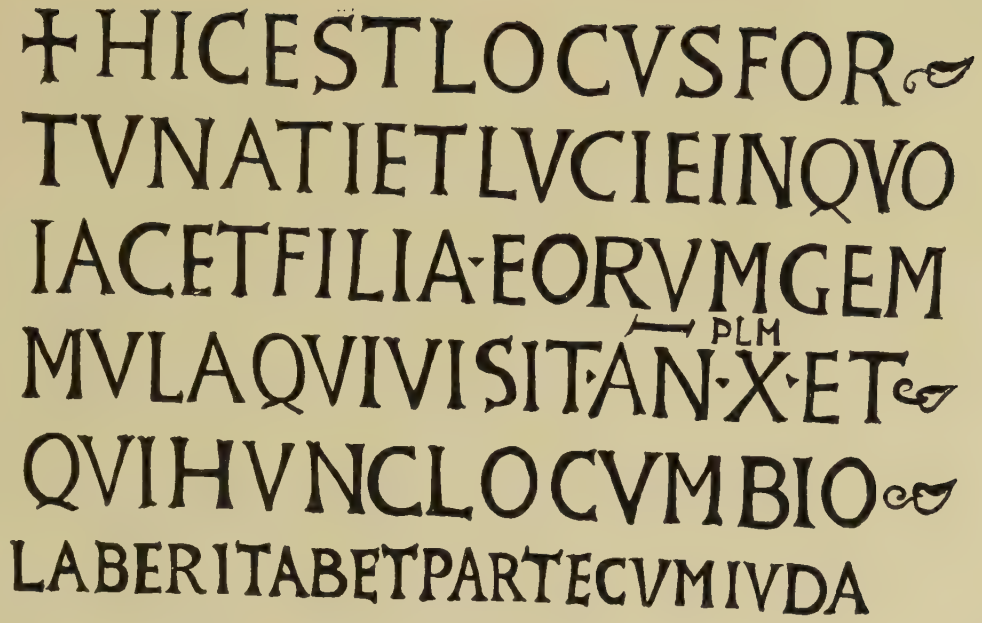
It was not till 1889 that a proof of this was found near the church of San Cosimato in Trastevere. This was an epitaph of a couple named Felix and Victorina, belonging probably to the close of the sixth century. On account of its importance and as a specimen of the writing of the period we have reproduced it in full (Ill. 206).[2] Felix, or, as he is called in the epitaph, Feles, was buried with his consort on the *Micaurea*, i.e. *Mica aurea*. The eastern slopes of the Janiculus were thus called during the Middle Ages, on account of their golden sands, whilst the churches of San Cosimato and San Giovanni della Malva situated there were formerly spoken of as *in Mica aurea*. The above recently discovered epitaph, which contains an allusion to this cemetery, is the first witness we have to this name, which probably originated in classical times.[3]

The fourth and last cemetery of the sixth century was not found till quite lately, in 1895, though it was situated on one of the most famous sites of early Rome, namely, on the north side of the Coliseum, below the Baths of Titus. Here, at the foot of the Oppius, in the heart of the monumental portion of the City,

[1] De Rossi, *Roma sott.*, I., 218, on the earlier find described by Lupi (*Dissert.*, 1, 65), and on the more recent excavations under Mgr. de Merode, the Papal Minister of War.

[2] From the original in the Museum of the Orto Botanico. "EIVE" for "SIVE" [?] "SE BIBIFECERNT" for "SE VIVIS FECERVNT," "MESE" for "MENSE," &c.; the diction and engraving likewise are typical of the period of decaying culture.

[3] See Gatti, *Della Mica aurea nel Trastevere* (*Bull. arch. com.*, 1889), p. 392; "della Malva" may be a corruption of *Mica aurea*.




Ill. 207.—Specimen of Sixth (Seventh ?) Century Epigraphy. Epitaph from the Cemetery of the Coliseum.

Christian tombs had been placed quite early, not only on the rubbish and soil which soon began to cover the ancient ground, but even on the original level on which the Coliseum was built. Probably some church existed here, and was surrounded by this burial-ground. The bricks for the tombs were purloined from earlier structures, as is shown by their classical stamps. Nine of these stamps belong, however, to the time of Theodoric the Goth, and in all likelihood the cemetery originated during his reign or shortly afterwards.

One especially interesting grave found during these excavations stood alone, and had almost the shape of a chest, covered with an arched lid. The simple inscription (Ill. 207)[1], belonging to the close of the sixth or the beginning of the seventh century, tells us in well-formed letters, but indifferent Latin, that this was "the place of Fortunatus and Lucia, where their daughter Gemmula, aged ten years, rests," and threatens with the fate of Judas any violator of this spot.

432. Formulæ such as the last, couched in language even more forcible, become more and more usual on the Christian tombs at the end of the sixth and in the seventh century. Early Christianity was unacquainted with such threats, and in the Catacombs they are unknown. Such formulæ were the outcome of the custom of burying the dead within the City, in consequence of which the tombs ran greater risks of being violated by passers-by, or by unscrupulous builders.[2]

Epitaphs also tended to become far more commonplace in their contents, a like deterioration being evident in the shape of the letters and in the engraving; many happy exceptions exist, however, to this rule.

Instead of the several names usual in classic antiquity, each person bears a single name. This may be seen, for instance, on the two epitaphs just noticed. Almost invariably the text of

[1] From a cast in the Museum of the Orto Botanico. GATTI, *Notizie degli scavi*, 1895, p. 203; *Bull. arch. com.*, 1895, No. 122. † HIC EST LOCVS FOR | TVNATI ET LVCIE IN QVO | IACET FILIA · EORVM GEM | MVLA QVI [*Quae*] VISIT [*vixit*] AN · X · ET | QVI HVNC LOCVM BIO | LABERIT [*violaverit*] ABET [*habet*] PARTE [*partem*] CVM IVDA. The tomb was destroyed when the new street was built. Of a portion of it a poor imitation exists in the Museum of the Orto Botanico on the Cælius. The tomb stood in front of the last pillar on the eastern side of the atrium of the Baths of Titus.

[2] GATTI, *Bull. arch. com.*, 1895, p. 123, gives some instances from the *Corp. inscr. lat.*; from DE ROSSI, *Inscr. christ.*; and FABRETTI, *Inscr. ant.*

the epitaph begins with a cross. The most frequent introduction is the simple "Here rests," or "Here lies," or "This is the place of," &c.; the old "*in pace*" is also common. The manner of dating also betrays a new period. The Kalends, Nones, and Ides of the ancient Romans are met less and less frequently, the date being given by the day of the month; indeed, no great care is taken to fix accurately the date of death. The epitaph from the *Mica aurea*, for instance, merely states that the deceased expired in the "month of August," while that from the Coliseum gives no date whatever.

The four cemeteries described were, of course, not the only ones in Rome. Graveyards probably grew up around many churches, especially the titular churches. The atriums of these buildings, those spacious square open places, were admittedly suited for such a purpose. In course of time, however, the dead were laid to rest at every convenient spot, even amongst the houses and the ancient monuments of the fallen City.

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433. The Christian tombs, for the most part poor and humble, strikingly contrasted with the City's buildings, still grand and stately in spite of their decay.

Yet a certain similarity of fate unites both in spite of their contrast. While Christians are burying everywhere their dead, Rome of the monuments is herself becoming one vast tomb; classical culture is expiring, and antiquity is already extinct. It does not ill-become the sinking City that it should shelter its departed Christian citizens and allow them to slumber near their shrines.

Contemporary writings prove that the aspect of Rome in those days failed not to excite melancholy thoughts. Rome, particularly, felt the distress caused by the inroads of the Lombards, who about this time began to descend on the unfortunate cities and lands which were then just on the point of recovering from their ruin. So great was the misery and terror, that even clear-headed men, whose views were in advance of their age, were ready to believe that the end of all things was at hand.

## CHAPTER V

### THE IRRUPTION OF THE LOMBARDS INTO ITALY

434. REDEMPTUS, Bishop of Ferentum, to the north of Rome, told Gregory the Great before the latter became Pope, how once, when visiting his parishes, he was overtaken by nightfall near the tomb of the martyr Eutychius, and had accordingly spent the night there. Towards midnight he had received a vision of the Saint, who said to him: "Watchest thou?" and on his replying: "I do watch," the Saint added: "The end of all flesh is at hand."[1]

Many connected this story of the Bishop, which was already in circulation during his lifetime, with certain prodigies in the skies, which, in the midst of the general excitement, they fancied they had seen at night; visions of fiery spears, and hosts in battle array, coming from the north, and marching through the firmament. That they were the Lombards, and that they forbode the downfall of Italy, became a general conviction when these signs in the heavens were recalled after the Lombard invasion was over.[2]

"Like a sword drawn from its scabbard," writes Gregory the Great, who, with dismay, witnessed these events, "the wild hordes suddenly fell upon us, and people sank on all sides as though mown down. Cities were depopulated, strongholds destroyed, churches burnt, and monasteries for either sex laid level with the ground. The fields lie waste and the country mourns its neglect, for there is no one to till it. The owners themselves have disappeared, and, where formerly there were crowds, wild beasts now lodge in solitude." These moving words, written only five-and-twenty years after Alboin's invasion of the Italian provinces, express the feelings of one living in a city utterly distracted by the news of misfortune reaching it from every quarter.[3]

[1] GREGOR., *Dial.* 3, c. 38.
[2] GREGOR., ibid., and *Hom. I. in Evangelia*, n. 1.
[3] GREGOR., *Dial.*, l.c. The Pope in other passages gives a similar description.

The best historian of the Lombards, Paulus Diaconus or Warnefrid, and, before him, certain early authorities, agree in stating that Narses, the Byzantine Regent of Italy, in revenge for his own treatment by the Empire, had summoned the Lombards into Italy from their settlements in Pannonia and on the Lower Danube. Popular tradition at an early date embellished the story by adding that Narses had despatched fruits from the gardens of Italy to attract the foreigners. It has proved impossible to explain the many difficulties inherent in these reports. The *Liber pontificalis* informs us that ultimately disagreements became rife between Narses and the inhabitants of Rome, in consequence of which, and as already narrated, Pope John III. was forced to take refuge at the Cemetery of Prætextatus. It is by no means impossible that during those days of incessant anxiety and alarm, such charges of treason against his sovereign may have been quite unfoundedly levelled at so unpopular a Governor as Narses. As so often happens, they would then have readily secured credit, and found their way into the by no means critical chronicles of that day.[1]

435. The invasion of the Lombard host was made through the Predil Pass in the spring of 568, *i.e.* in the pontificate of John III.[2]

In setting out from their settlements in Pannonia, and even while on the march, they attracted swarms of other warlike Germans, Gepidæ, Saxons, Alemanni, and Suevi, as well as Slavs from the East. The invaders were mostly heathen, though the Lombards, for the most part, were Arians.

Alboin is said to have ascended in Friuli, when coming from the Alps, the mountain which to this day is called the King's Mount (Monte del Re). Here with his retinue he looked down upon the lovely plain of the country stretched out before him. A future made up of battles and sorrows for luckless Italy lay

[1] The *Liber pont.*, 1, 305, n. 110, *Iohannes III.*, says already: "*Narsis scripsit genti Langobardorum, ut venirent et possiderent Italiam.*" Paulus Diaconus, or Warnefrid, *Hist. Lang.*, 2, c. 5, relies on tradition when he speaks of the "*multimoda pomorum genera aliarumque rerum species, quarum Italia ferax est.*" He also speaks of Narses's threat to the Empress Sophia: "*talem se eidem telam orditurum, qualem ipsa, dum viveret deponere non posset.*" Ed. BETHMANN-WAITZ (*Mon. Germ. hist., SS. rer. Lang. et Ital.*), p. 5. Cp. FREDEGARIUS, 3, 65, ed. KRUSCH (*Mon. Germ. hist., SS. rer. Merov.*, 2), p. 110. For John III. and Narses, see *Liber pont.*, 1, 305, n. 110. HARTMANN, *Gesch. Italiens im MA.*, 2 (1900), 23, 33.

[2] On the Predil Pass, see *Neues Archiv*, 15 (1890), 211.

in the wild cravings and projects which at that moment must have filled the enterprising warrior and his followers.[1]

The invading flood then swept into the plain. It comprised men, women, and children, with their possessions, provisions, and army material loaded on waggons, escorted by fleet horsemen. The inhabitants of the country hastened to the cities of refuge, but the cities themselves soon yielded to hunger. The Byzantine troops, few in number, badly captained, and with their pay in arrears, failed to make a stand. The citizens could only seek safety in flight to the coasts.

Milan was taken September 4th, 569, and the occupant of the see, Honoratus, a schismatic Bishop and upholder of the Three Chapters, fled to the stronghold of Genoa, instead of suffering with his flock. Paulinus, too, the head of the Three-Chapters faction in Aquileia, forsook his episcopal city before it was invested. He hastily gathered together the Cathedral treasures, and hurried to the safer, rocky island of Gradus (Grado) to the south of Aquileia. This became the new head-quarters of the Metropolitan, whilst Aquileia itself perished in the flames.

The cities of Venetia were, almost all, taken by the Lombards. Only Patavium, Mons Silicis (Monselice), Mantua, and a few others held out. The province of Istria remained, however, partly Byzantine. On the other hand, the Lombard King captured Ticinum (Pavia), dominating the river Po, after three years' blockade. During the tedious and difficult siege, he sent on his soldiers to the south, where these wild guests filled the City of Rome with terror. Many districts between Rome and Ravenna were mercilessly ravaged by them. Meanwhile the commander-in-chief appointed by the Emperor, Longinus the Prefect of Italy, proved powerless to resist, receiving but little help from the East, while, to add to his difficulties, famine and pestilence raged throughout the land, as though in league with the Lombards. The Lombards, flushed with victory, were already threatening an incursion into Southern Italy when Alboin, in May or June 572, was slain by his own men.

After the King's murder and the reign of his successor, Cleph, which lasted only a year and half, came ten years of anarchy

[1] PAUL. DIAC., 2, c. 8: "*montem, qui in eisdem locis prominet, ascendit,*" &c.

among the Lombards, every captain striving to reign on his own account. This was in one sense the saving of Rome, for it prevented the carrying out of any coherent plan of warfare; in fact it was to this lack of method displayed by the Lombards that the City owed it never to have fallen into their hands. As for the provinces given over to the enemy, that "decennary of the dukes" was only the more terrible, indeed it was the worst period of the invasion. "At that time," says Warnefrid, "many noble Romans (*i.e.* Latins of the provinces) were murdered from greed, the rest were forced to pay tribute of a third of their property to the Lombards. Churches were plundered, priests killed, cities devastated, and the people exterminated. Parts of Italy which had hitherto escaped conquest passed under the yoke of the Lombards." Such is a sketch, made in bold strokes, of the wretched country.[1]

Sicily, however, and the two southern extremities of the peninsula were never subjugated, whilst Naples and Rome too, with their neighbourhood, always remained Byzantine. Ravenna, with a part of the Exarchate and the Pentapolis, was subdued only for a time. Likewise the sea-coasts of Venetia, of Istria, including Pola and Parentium, and of Liguria, with Genoa, remained secure.

On the other hand, the Lombards obtained a firm footing in Spoletium and Beneventum. In the former city, Faroald and his successor, Ariulf, established the headquarters of a dukedom of Spoleto amidst the grand edifices of the Romans and Pelasgians; in the second Duke Zotto, followed by Arichis, laid the foundation of his rule.

It was Zotto, a savage and ungovernable prince, who, in 589, attacked the monastery of Monte Cassino. There four saintly men, Constantine, Simplicius, Vitalis, and Bonitus, had ruled as abbots after the death of Benedict the founder. Under the last it was that the treacherous assault took place. He and his monks were awakened in the night by the clash of arms, and compelled to seek safety in flight. With nothing but the original charter of the Benedictine rule, and their rations of bread and wine, they reached Rome, where they were given a monastery near the

[1] Paul. Diac., 2, c. 32 (*an.* 575). Cp. Gregor. Tur., *Hist. Franc.*, 4, c. 41: "*regionem ingressi* [*Langobardi*], *maxime per septem annos pervagantes, spoliatis ecclesiis, sacerdotibus interfectis, in suam redigunt potestatem.*"

Lateran, which was for many years governed by their abbot, Valentinian. Ultimately, after nearly a century and a half, Monte Cassino rose again from its ruins.

436. In the meantime Pope John III. had died, and **Benedict I.**, a Roman, who succeeded him, June 2, 575, found himself and his flock plunged into the horrors of war, with no help forthcoming from Byzantium. On the Bosphorus money and troops were scarce, nor was there, perhaps, any general who could have been entrusted with such a campaign. Want of confidence, even more than its poverty, proved the undoing of the Eastern Court.

In 577 the Patrician Pamphronius departed from Rome, on a mission to Constantinople, carrying a sum of three hundred pounds in gold wherewith to persuade the reigning autocrat and Tiberius, his heir-apparent, to take measures in favour of the City. His mission was, however, in vain, and he had to bring back the money. At the Court he was informed that, in view of the other engagements of the Empire, it would not be possible to assist Italy for some time to come. He was therefore advised to offer his money as a bribe either to the leaders of the Lombards or to the Frankish dukes, who might then assail the enemy in the rear. As things stood, the Empire had its hands quite full with the Persian War.[1]

At any rate, under Benedict I., when the City stood in danger of famine, the Romans had at least the satisfaction of receiving the time-honoured Imperial annona brought by corn-ships from Egypt.[2]

It may have been at this time that the Emperor Justin II. and his consort, Sophia, presented Rome with the famous cross containing a relic of the True Cross, for the inscription on it alludes to the aid which Justin hoped Heaven would send the City out of consideration for it. This cross of precious metal

[1] MENANDER, *Excerpt. de legat. gentium ad Rom.*, 25; *P.G.*, CXIII., 835: Pamphronius brought to Constantinople ἄχρι κεντηναρίων τριάκοντα, *i.e.* thirty centenaria or three hundred pounds in gold. We may well believe that the money had been raised from the estates of the Church, as happened so frequently on similar occasions. "*Viginti iam et septem annos ducimus, quod in hac urbe inter Langobardorum gladios vivimus*," writes Gregory the Great, on June 1, 595, to the Empress Constantina, "*quibus quam multa ab hac ecclesia cotidianis diebus erogantur, ut inter eos vivere possimus, suggerenda non sunt.*" He also calls himself the treasurer (*saccellarius*) of the Lombards. *Registrum*, 5, n. 39, ed. Maur., in MIGNE, 5, n. 21.

[2] *Liber pont.*, I, 308, *Benedictus*, n. III.

now forms the most ancient and remarkable specimen of such votive offerings possessed by St. Peter's (see Vol. II., Ill. 131).

In the summer of 579 Rome experienced her first siege by the Lombard hosts, Benedict I. dying July 30, in that same year, as the *Liber pontificalis* says, "sunk in sorrow and affliction." His pontificate had lasted a little over four years.[1]

Whereas, before Benedict, the See had been vacant for nearly a year, his successor, **Pelagius II.**, likewise a Roman, ascended the Papal throne on November 26, 579, barely four months after his predecessor's death, and reigned for ten years. He was consecrated while the foe was still raging at the gates. At other times it was usual to delay the consecration until the Emperor's assent had been obtained. On this occasion, however, all communication was impossible, either with the Court at Constantinople or with the Imperial plenipotentiary at Ravenna. Yet, at this moment, Rome could ill forego the protection which the Pope, at the head of the City, had long been accustomed to exercise. Hence Pelagius was consecrated without further ado and without any ratification having been obtained (Cp. above, p. 56 f.).[2]

It appears that only the active intervention of the Pope, and particularly liberal offers of the Church's gold, succeeded in inducing the enemy to withdraw. At any rate we find Pelagius II., at a later date, speaking of the oath taken by the Lombards to refrain from attacking Rome.[3]

As soon as the besiegers had retreated, an embassy from the Pope and City again set out for Constantinople, to ask for help, and, at the same time also, to come to an understanding with the Court respecting the Pope's election. The Emperor Tiberius, who had meanwhile assumed the reins of government, in 579 or 580, at last nominated a special Commander-in-chief for Italy, whose office was identified with that of the Exarch of Italy. But beyond sending a few troops, East Rome could do little more than revert to its old expedient of either bribing

[1] *Liber pont.*, ibid. For the length of the pontificate of this and the succeeding Popes, see DUCHESNE, *Liber pont.*, 1, p. cclv. ff. and Pl. p. cclxi. ff.

[2] "*Hic ordinatur absque iussione principis, eo quod Langobardi obsederent civitatem romanam et multa vastatio ab eis in Italia fieret.*" *Liber pont.*, 1, 309, n. 112. Ed. MOMMSEN, p. 160.

[3] Letter written in 584 to Gregory the Apocrisiarius at Constantinople. *P.L.*, LXXV., 76; LXXII., 703; JAFFÉ-KALTENBR., n. 1052. New edition by HARTMANN in *Mon. Germ. hist., Epist.*, 2, 2, p. 440.

the Lombard leaders, or inciting the Franks to create a diversion by invading the northern frontiers of the Lombard territories.[1]

437. Pope Pelagius II. himself repeatedly appealed to the Franks. Aunacharius, Bishop of Antissiodorum, having sent an embassy to Rome to fetch some relics of SS. Peter and Paul, the Pope improved the occasion. The diocese ruled by Aunacharius belonged to the Burgundian realm of King Guntram, and as the Bishop was held in high esteem by this King, and likewise enjoyed consideration at the other Frankish Courts, he seemed the right man to advocate the cause of Italy and Rome. Hence the Pope requested him to give practical effect to the reverence for Rome and the See of Peter, so profusely expressed by his envoys, by interceding with the Frankish princes on behalf of the City. The Pope seems to fathom the future: "It is our conviction that Providence bestowed upon your Kings the true Faith, yea, the same that is held by the Roman Empire, that this City of Rome, whence comes the Faith, and all Italy might obtain neighbourly protection from you."[2]

The plans of Pelagius were not, however, particularly successful in the West. He lacked the effectual support of the Empire. At first the Emperor Mauritius, who succeeded Tiberius, paid but little attention to Italian affairs. Even the important seaport, Classis, near Ravenna, was allowed to fall into the Lombards' hands. When the Pope appealed to Ravenna for help, Decius, the Patrician, who since 584 had been Exarch, explained to him that he could not even defend the surrounding districts, much less attend to Rome. In Rome itself there was but a small band of Byzantine soldiers, with no *magister militum*, and without even a *dux*.[3]

The untiring Pope again turned with anxious remonstrances

[1] On the embassy, see MENANDER, l.c., n. 25, p. 835. On the Commander-in-chief, see HARTMANN, *Byzantin. Verwaltung in Italien*, p. 8.

[2] "*Nec enim credimus otiosum nec sine magna divinae providentiae admiratione* [*administratione?*] *dispositum, quod vestri reges romano imperio in orthodoxae fidei confessione sunt similes; nisi ut huic urbi, ex qua fuerat oriunda, vel universae Italiae finitimos adiutoresque praestaret.*" Letter dated October 5, 580. *P.L.*, LXXII., 705; JAFFÉ-KALTENBR., n. 1048. New edition by Gundlach in *Mon. Germ. hist., Epist.*, 3, 448. Cp. the second letter (in *P.L.*, ibid., 744; GUNDLACH, 449; JAFFÉ-KALTENBR., 1057), dated October 31, 586, where the Pope again laments the miseries of war, but makes no further allusion to political intervention.

[3] From the previously quoted (p. 156, note 3) letter of the Pope to Gregory.

to Constantinople, where the future Pope, Gregory, the Roman deacon, was then apocrisiary. Unhappily, only one of the "many letters" has been spared to us, which Pelagius, according to Paul the Deacon, sent to Gregory. In this, Pelagius, among other things, says: "What we endure from the Lombards, in spite of the oath sworn to us, no tongue could ever tell. . . . Unless God moves the heart of the Emperor to hasten to our aid, then all is at stake." A Papal notary, Honoratus, had arrived in Rome from Ravenna. He was thoroughly acquainted with the position of affairs there, having apparently been accredited to the Exarch's Court as Papal "*Responsalis*" or apocrisiary. In the autumn of 584 Pelagius sent him to Constantinople, with a certain Bishop Sebastian, that both might support Gregory in an urgent appeal for help.[1]

438. The long interregnum of the Lombard "dukes" came to an end at about this time, and Cleph's son Authari was chosen King. He took the classic name of Flavius in addition to his own barbaric one, aping in this the Byzantine Emperors, who were accustomed to borrow the name of Flavius from the family of Vespasian and Titus, though with no more right than Authari.

In spite of the regal title, Lombard royalty was only superficial. The great crimes, which hitherto had signalised their changes of rulers, continued to disgrace them. Alboin, their first king in Italy, had been murdered in revenge by his wife Rosamund, and she was in turn disposed of by poison at Ravenna. King Cleph fell by the sword of a slave, and our authorities state that King Authari also was poisoned by a traitor. Such tragedies were a reproach to the throne established by force in the heart of a Christian country.

From the time of Authari's successor, Agilulf, we have a work which displays the portraits of some of those savage warriors who conquered Italy. The scene, executed with utter lack of artistic skill, is a sort of glorification of Agilulf—whose name is inscribed near his head—and of the victorious sword, which the King, seated on a throne, bears across his knees

[1] From the previously quoted (p. 156, note 3) letter of the Pope to Gregory.

Ill. 208.—Silver Plate with King Agilulf surrounded by Lombards and Figures of Victory.

(Photo, Museo del Bargello, Florence.)

(Ill. 208).[1] This work of art, if we may so call it, now in the Museo del Bargello at Florence, is the oldest representation known of the Lombards during their occupation of Italy, and consists of a very thin silver plate in hammered work. Two attendants, with shield, spear and plumed helmets, guard the King; two winged Victories hover to the right and the left, but so ludicrously shown that they would not be recognisable save that they each hold a shield with the word VICTVRIA. In the other hand each brandishes a horn of plenty; beyond these, on either side, are Lombards, possibly vanquished "dukes," coming to make their submission; finally, at each extremity, a youth is seen bringing the King a crown surmounted by a cross. Two slender towers form a sort of framework for the picture. Especially noticeable in these Lombards is their long hair, parted in the middle and hanging down on each side. The King, too, has a very long, shaggy, pointed beard; to this custom of wearing beards the nation owed the name of Lombards, Langobardi, or "Long beards." The epitaph in Ravenna of Duke Droctulf, who deserted Authari, and went over to the Empire, says of him: "His face was terrible to behold . . . a long beard covered his mighty breast."[2]

The description given by Warnefrid of the pictures from Lombard history in the palace of Agilulf's consort Theodelinde at Modicia (Monza) affords fuller details about the outward appearance of the Lombards: "They shaved the neck and back of the head," he says, "and allowed the remaining hair to hang over their cheeks down to the mouth, taking care, however, to part it in the middle. Their dress was loose and usually of linen, resembling that of the Anglo-Saxons; it was commonly ornamented with broad coloured stripes. Their shoes were open above almost down to the big toe, and kept in place by crossed leathern thongs."[3]

[1] Cp. UMBERTO ROSSI, *Archivio storico dell' arte*, 1893, p. 22. Near the King's head stands the inscription: DN AG IL VL REG [?] in connection with which we should read the twice-repeated word VICTVRIA, *i.e.*, Victory to King Agilulf. The plate can scarcely be Lombard work, as Lombard art was then not yet born.

[2] On Droctulf, see PAUL. DIAC., *Hist Lang.*, 3, c. 19; ed. BETHMANN, p. 102. The inscription says: "*Terribilis visu facies, sed corda benigna | Longaque robusto pectore barba fuit.*"

[3] PAUL. DIAC., ibid., 4, c. 23; BETHMANN, p. 124. Warnefrid adds: "*Postea vero coeperunt osis [hosis] uti, super quas equitantes subrugos birreos mittebant.*"

The heathen barbarism, idolatry, and unbelief which overran Italy with the military rabble seemed to plunge the land into hopeless darkness. Contemporaries describe the invaders quite simply as Pagans and abominable idol-worshippers. Even their Arianism, in itself impotent and effete, is mentioned only in connection with their persecution of the Catholics. The worship of Odin was practised by the conquerors in Italy under various forms; goats were sacrificed to the god, their heads being laid before him. Adders also were worshipped. Thus the City of Rome during its siege under Pelagius II. saw in its immediate neighbourhood the lowest and unholiest forms of heathen worship.[1]

During a sacrificial festival of the Lombards, held at some place not named, four hundred Christian captives were brought in. With song and dance the Barbarians fetched the goat's head, and ordered the Christians to worship it. When many stoutly refused, the Lombards in their fury seized their swords and butchered them. In 578, again, forty prisoners were massacred because they refused to partake of the flesh of sacrifice. Among the Catholics tales were told of heavenly signs and wonders that had happened for the protection of holy men, or, after their death, to glorify their willing sacrifice.[2]

A pleasant picture, in refreshing contrast to the ferocity of the times, is, however, to be found in the life of the hermit Menas in Samnium, loved and revered by the people, but dreaded by the Lombards. He had relinquished all his worldly goods, in order to make others happy; sinners coming to him were affectionately reproved, and, with holy violence, compelled to take the path of Heaven. By special grace he was even able to read the secrets of men's hearts. The faithful were accustomed to send him little presents from their stores, that in his solitude he might exercise the hospitality he loved to show to those who sought him out. One day a fierce Lombard attacked him, and tried to carry off his all, consisting of a few beehives. According to the popular belief, however, an evil spirit at once entered into the robber and dreadfully tormented him. God thus showed the Lombards how great a saint Menas was. Such was his power that by lifting his

[1] *Pelagius II. ad Aunacharium*, JAFFÉ-KALTENBR., n. 1048: "*idololatrae.*" GREG. M., *Dial.* 2, c. 17; 3, c. 37; *Registrum*, 2, n. 4 (2, n. 2); *Hom.* 1 *in Evang.*, n. 1. On the superstitious veneration of adders in the city of Benevento, see the hymn to St. Barbatus, in BORGIA, *Memorie storiche di Benevento*, 2, 277 ff.

[2] GREG., *Dial.* 3, c. 28, 27. *Dial.* 1, c. 4, at the end; 3, c. 37; 4, c. 21; 4, c. 23.

stick he could drive away the bears of the neighbourhood from his hives. After his encounter with the marauder, he obtained such fame among the Lombards that none of them would venture to approach his cell save with the utmost respect.[1]

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In the early part of King Authari's reign, the Exarch Smaragdus came to Italy to take the place of Decius.[2]

Smaragdus gained advantages over the Lombards by inducing Droctulf, one of their dukes, to desert to him. Classis and Brexillus (Bersello) were reconquered for the Empire. In consequence of this the Byzantines were able to conclude a fairly honourable three years' truce.

The Holy See availed itself of this period of peace to commence negotiations with the schismatic Bishops of Northern Italy, in the hope of bringing them back to the fold.

[1] GREG., *Dial.* 3, c. 26.
[2] Probably as early as 585. HARTMANN, p. 10.

## CHAPTER VI

### ROME AND THE SCHISM OF AQUILEIA

439. The efforts previously described of Pope Pelagius I. to terminate the schism which had arisen in the West on account of the Three Chapters had been only partially successful. The Bishops of Venetia and Istria, and particularly the Metropolitan See of Aquileia, now removed to Grado, continued to oppose overtly the condemnation of the Chapters by the fifth Œcumenical Council. They were thus in open rebellion against the See of Rome, which had staked its authority upon that Council. Public disorder in Italy having long hindered any mutual advances, or even any intercourse whatever, the breach remained unhealed.

Pelagius II., therefore, after the Byzantine military successes just mentioned, resumed with fresh energy the efforts for reunion. He was desirous of restoring the alienated North Italian territories to Roman unity, in order the more effectually to secure the blessings of religion to those dioceses which were being so sorely tried. But church unity was, in his mind, to react also upon politics; it was to be the salvation of society; it was to increase the power of resistance against the invaders of the threatened districts; lastly, it was to secure the conversion of the Barbarians. The Pope sent a touching and affectionate letter to the separated Bishops of Venetia and Istria and to their subjects.

"During recent times," he writes to them, "we have for our sins been forced to endure unheard-of trials and judgments from God. Could we but attain to unity and peace there would be some hope of these public chastisements also coming to an end. We should then secure both earthly and everlasting peace. . . . Yet, with great pain, I perceive how you still persist in schism. You prefer to be as vine-branches severed from their roots. You wish to labour outside the vineyard to which the Lord has appointed us, and in which alone a reward may be obtained. . . . Know you not that whosoever is not at peace and in communion

with the Church can have no part in God? . . . Look around you. The end of the world is at hand, and complete desolation covers the earth; whole districts lie deserted; a stormy deluge overwhelms our age, as under Noe, and yet, dear brethren, you refuse to enter into the Ark of Salvation."[1]

Such is the anxious Pope's invitation to the Ark of Unity. As a matter of fact, the union of Catholics throughout West and East under the Primate was—apart from the Three-Chapters schism—a grand and edifying spectacle. In all countries Rome was recognised as the Keystone of Unity. One might have wandered from the farthest Asiatic frontiers of the Byzantine Empire as far as Ireland, and from the African deserts to the Frankish realms, and yet have found everywhere the persuasion of the necessity of communion with the Roman successors of St. Peter as the divinely appointed guardians of the Faith.

The schismatic advocates of the Three Chapters argued, however, that the Apostolic See, by approving the decisions of Constantinople, had connived at an infraction of the Church's ancient Faith.

Pelagius, accordingly, in the same letter, adds: "Reflect, my dearest brethren, that eternal Truth can never be convicted of error. Our Lord commissioned Peter to confirm the Faith of his brethren. Christ prayed for him, 'that his Faith might not fail.' Hence Peter's faith will never be shaken to all eternity; it remains unchangeable. . . . Remember, too, that to Peter was entrusted the feeding of all the sheep; to him were the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven committed; upon him the Saviour has built His Church, against which the Gates of Hell shall not prevail."

The Pope does not omit, however, to add that the Holy See still holds firm to the doctrines set forth at Chalcedon. For, as already pointed out (see above, p. 37), his opponents had urged in justification of their schism that the rejection of the Three Chapters had implied a condemnation of the Council of Chalcedon. He finally entreats the Bishops to send envoys to Rome; there they would be kindly received and provided with all the information they might desire concerning the Three Chapters.

This letter was written in 585 or 586. The messengers chosen

[1] *Eliae Aquileiensi*, &c. MANSI, 9, 891; *P.L.*, LXXII., 706; JAFFÉ-KALTENBR., n. 1054. New edition by HARTMANN, App. III. to GREG., *Reg.*, I, p. 442.

by Pelagius to carry it were Redemptus, the good Bishop of Ferentum, to whom we owe the story of the prediction of the end of the world made to him by the martyr Eutychius, and Quodvultdeus, Abbot of the "Greater Monastery of the Basilica of St. Peter." Their first visit was to be to Elias, Archbishop of Aquileia, then resident on the island of Gradus.

440. Elias had succeeded Archbishop Paulinus, who had escaped from the destruction of Aquileia by fleeing to Gradus. The dioceses which Elias controlled, at least nominally, from his metropolitan See of Gradus, extended far up to the North. Besides Venetia, Istria, and parts of Illyricum, the ecclesiastical province of Aquileia at that time embraced Noricum and Rhætia Secunda. As long as the Roman Empire was supreme in these regions, it was right and natural that Aquileia should take the first place. But since the provinces had been seized by the German invaders, the bond of union between them had been loosened. The schismatic Archbishops of Gradus, nevertheless, saw fit to assume great importance in their dealings with the Empire. They sought to persuade the Byzantine Court that the reconquest of the occupied provinces would depend very largely on their good will; they also diligently kept up the delusive hopes of the Eastern Empire that the enemy would soon be ousted, and that their own devotion to the Imperial cause would hinder any further inroads of the Lombards.[1]

441. The North Italian schism ended more promptly on the western side of the Peninsula, *i.e.* at Milan and Genoa. Honoratus, the Archbishop of Milan, who had carried the schism with him to Genoa, was dead. After his demise, the electors, assembled in Genoa, chose (*ca.* 574) Lawrence II. as their Archbishop. A rival of the name of Fronto was, however, set up by those of the clergy who remained behind at Milan. This schism within a schism was to lead to a reconciliation with Rome. Lawrence, who seems to have been more desirous of unity, and more open to conviction than his opponent, entered on negotiations with the Holy See, and, through his envoys, made

[1] ". . . *quousque compressis gentibus ad libertatem omnes sacerdotes concilii sub sancta republica pervenirent.*" Words used by the Istrian schismatics in 591 in a letter to the Emperor. MANSI, 10, 463; GREG., *Reg.*, 1, n. 16a; cp. MOMMSEN, *Neues Archiv*, 17, 189.

a statement, duly witnessed, to the effect that he renounced schism, and submitted to the Roman Church.[1]

On the death of the reconciled Archbishop's rival, opposition to Rome throughout this diocese was virtually at an end. Lawrence was acknowledged in Milan itself by the remaining clergy, and his successor Constantius also proved true to the cause of unity.[2]

The declaration just mentioned, made by Lawrence in Rome, did not touch the question of the Three Chapters; this agrees with what we have already explained elsewhere; communion with the Apostolic See, and rejection of everything which it rejected, was deemed sufficient, such a formulary comprehending all that was necessary. It had wisely been made a rule no longer to broach the highly involved, and, now, scarcely intelligible, question of the Three Chapters, except where circumstances made it unavoidable.

442. On the other hand, the schismatic Bishops of North-east Italy, and particularly the titular Archbishop of Aquileia, stubbornly adhered to their own view of the Three Chapters. The Papal messengers returned from Gradus and from Istria without any reply, the answer, seemingly, having been drawn up later at a Council. In due course delegates from the Council attended in Rome, and, in the name of their brethren, handed in a memorandum. In this all discussion was curtly refused, and merely certain inappropriate passages were cited from ancient church writers to prove that the schismatics were right in their attitude towards the Three Chapters. The delegates themselves were not men of education. In Rome they were shown documents, which, had they been capable of instruction, would have convinced them that the original question in dispute had been wrongly understood in Venetia and Istria. The trouble was, however, wasted, and the envoys refused to be persuaded.[3]

In spite of this failure the Pope sent, in 585 or 586, a fresh

[1] GREG., *Reg.*, 4, n. 2; JAFFÉ-EWALD, n. 1273.

[2] NORIS, *Diss. historica de Synodo V.* (*Opera*, ed. 1729, t. 1), 694. Lawrence is supposed to have died on August 21, 592. HEFELE (*Conciliengesch.*, 2, 921 and 922) by mistake calls his successor Constantine instead of Constantius. Cp. GREG., *Reg.*, 4, n. 2, to Constantius, and 4, n. 37 (4, n. 39), also to him, concerning certain Bishops in the diocese of Milan who still had scruples about the union.

[3] Pelagius in his second letter speaks of the schismatics' memorandum as an "*interdictum*" pronounced against himself.

letter to Elias and his Bishops. In this, he again answers in general terms the objections raised, as well as certain other questions concerning the Three Chapters. Once again, and with still stronger emphasis and paternal affection, he showed the need of returning to the "bosom of the mother": "Think you," he asks the Bishops, "that in the Day of God's Judgment, Theodore of Mopsuestia or Ibas with his epistle will come to your help and save you?" He several times cites Cyprian of Carthage, who speaks so strongly of communion with the One Church as a condition for salvation. He points to Augustine, who holds that any separation from the "Apostolic Sees" is to be deplored. Now, on the question at issue, *viz.* that of the Three Chapters, the "Apostolic Sees," according to the Pope, agree entirely in both doctrine and policy.

This allusion to the "Apostolic Sees" was a concession to the point of view of the Pope's adversaries, whose prejudices against definitions emanating from the Roman See alone were so strong.[1]

In this letter Pelagius once more proposes a conference in Rome, attended by really competent men chosen from among the schismatic Bishops. Should they, however, in view of the dangers consequent upon war, prefer Ravenna as the place of meeting, he is quite ready to send representatives there to meet a Council.[2]

A third letter, purporting to be by Pelagius and addressed to the same Bishops, is also preserved. This long and important document, however, seems rather to have been a memorandum intended to accompany the second letter. It deals at great length with the intricate question of the condemnation of the Three Chapters, which was again and again being brought forward against Rome. Pelagius had entrusted the drafting of this document, and no doubt also of the two above-cited letters, to his

[1] LANGEN (*Gesch. der röm. Kirche*, 2, 406, 410) labours to show that the Pope's appeal to the Apostolic Sees implies a doubt as to the decisive doctrinal authority of the Pope of Rome. See, however, above, p. 41 f.

[2] *Eliae Aquileiensi*, &c. MANSI, 9, 895; *P.L.*, LXXII., 710; HARTMANN, App. III., n. 2, p. 445; JAFFÉ-KALTENBR., n. 1055. As belonging to St. Cyprian (*De unit. eccl.*), Pelagius here quotes, among others, the following passages: "*Primatus Petro datur, ut una Christi ecclesia et cathedra monstretur*," and: "*Qui cathedram Petri, super quam ecclesia fundata est, deserit et resistit, in ecclesia se esse confidit?*" which will not be found in the genuine works of Cyprian. The Pope may have had before him an edition of Cyprian containing these interpolations, or the passages may have been added to his own letter by a later hand. They may, moreover, be struck out without any damage to the argument, for the other passages quoted by Pelagius from Cyprian suffice to prove the Pope's contention. On the quotations, cp. *De unitate ecclesiae*, c. 4, 11, 13, 14, 17, 19, ed. HARTEL (*Corpus script. eccles. lat. Vindob.*, 3, 1).

future successor, Gregory, who by that time was again back in Rome. In composing the memorandum Gregory utilised the Lateran archives, and thus produced the best summary of the question which has come down to us. In it we have a learned dissertation, at once historical and theological, impartially setting forth the reasons for which the luckless Chapters were condemned.[1]

More than this the Roman Church could not have been expected to do.

443. The Exarch Smaragdus, at the request of Pope Pelagius, now made strong representations to Elias and his party, and ordered them at least to take part in the Council to be held at Ravenna. Realising that the intervention of the secular power might have serious consequences for them, the schismatics sent a humble petition to the Emperor Mauritius, praying that the matter might be allowed to stand over till their dioceses had shaken off the Lombard yoke. As soon as this was accomplished, they promised to betake themselves to the Court at Constantinople, and there await judgment. Meanwhile, however, they trusted that their gracious sovereign would command the Exarch "not to molest any Bishop on account of Communion (with Rome)."[2]

Soon after this singular appeal to the supreme secular power in 586 or 587, Elias, the usurping Archbishop, died. His suffragans lost no time, and elected, to use their own words, "for the holy Church of Aquileia, the most blessed Archbishop Severus."[3]

Smaragdus, the Exarch, was, however, determined, nor did any letter of respite arrive from Constantinople to thwart his action. Hence, in conformity with the law of the Christian Empire, he proceeded to Gradus, and there arrested the pretended Archbishop, together with some other Bishops, and brought them captives to Ravenna. Could we but trust the accounts of the

[1] *Eliae Aquileiensi*, &c. MANSI, 9, 433; *P.L.*, LXXII., 715; HARTMANN, App. III., n. 3, p. 449; JAFFÉ-KALTENBR., n. 1056. PAUL. DIAC., *Hist. Lang.*, 3, c. 20: "*epistolam satis utilem misit, quam beatus Gregorius, cum esset adhuc diaconus, conscripsit.*" Cp. GREG., *Reg.*, 2, n. 49 (2, n. 51), where the letter is called a "*liber*." LANGEN (l.c., p. 406) has it that Gregory the Great composed all three letters of Pelagius to the schismatics. We may state here that Langen wrongly cites "PAUL. DIAC., *Hist. misc.*, III., 2," for Gregory's journey to Constantinople, nor is this the only mistake made by this writer in his quotations. The *Hist. misc.* is not by Paulus Diaconus, nor does it contain the passage in question at the place referred to, nor anywhere else. Even had it contained it, it would have been worthless as a proof, for the work is both late and uncritical.

[2] From the letter cited p. 164, note 1.

[3] Ibid.

schismatics, their chief Bishop was even beaten with staves. At any rate, it is correct that he and his supporters were sternly ordered to enter into communion with John, the Archbishop of Ravenna, an act which would naturally have brought them part of the way to Rome. As they refused to do so, they were kept in prison.

After the lapse of a year Severus, by signing a union formulary, obtained permission to return to his See. In consequence of this act his supporters refused to have any dealings with him, and he finally withdrew his subscription at a Synod of ten Bishops held at Murano, near Venice. This Synod took place between the end of 588 and beginning of 590.

In 589 the zealous Exarch Smaragdus lost his post, and it is not unlikely that the persistent complaints of the schismatics at Court may have contributed to his downfall. At least it is certain that the Exarch Romanus, who succeeded him at Ravenna in 589–590, after the short administration of the Exarch Julian, held different views, and was less opposed to the Bishops' party.

The fact of the matter is that Constantinople preferred, in view of the political situation, to leave the schism alone, in spite of its being contrary to law. This was clearly proved when Gregory the Great, who succeeded Pelagius on the Papal throne, and was supported by the sovereign, cited Severus and other episcopal ringleaders to account for themselves in Rome before a Synod. This was in January 591, and the truce which followed Authari's death (September 5, 590) had made possible the journey to Rome, or at least had deprived the schismatics of the excuse of dangers to be incurred. Nevertheless they chose to refuse the invitation, and, instead, held two Synods in their own dioceses, at both of which it was unanimously agreed to make fresh representations to the Emperor. Those of the Bishops who belonged to the districts still occupied by the Lombards assembled in Gradus, under the presidency of Severus. The rest of the Bishops met at some place unknown.

444. The two pseudo-Synods despatched by the hand of clerics petitions in defence of their schism to the Emperor. That sent by the Bishops in the Lombard sphere of influence has alone been preserved. Its authors call themselves "Bishops of Venetia and Rhætia Secunda," and their letter is equally noteworthy for

its fulsome deference to the Emperor and for the veiled political threats which it conveys.[1]

We again find here the promise that, as soon as the enemy have been expelled, the Bishops will betake themselves to the Emperor's Majesty in order to be judged by him. "God ever deigns to end ecclesiastical controversies as soon as they are brought before a Christian sovereign." They endeavour to show that the Pope, being himself biassed, could give no decision. Our people, so they urge, must not be embittered, otherwise if one of us comes to die they will prevent his successor from seeking consecration in Gradus; then recourse will have to be had to the neighbouring Gaulish Archbishops, and the province of Aquileia will perish, and that at a time when, in view of the state of things in Italy, union would be of great advantage to the Empire. The Gaulish Bishops have already occupied three Sees in this Province, namely, the *ecclesia Beconensis*, *Tiburniensis*, and *Augustana*. Hence, seeing the awkward position of public affairs, we venture to hope that the Emperor will prevent Papal measures being taken against us. Thus wrote the petitioners.

The *ecclesia Tiburniensis* is Debern in Lurnfeld (Carinthia); *Augustana* is probably Augsburg, *Beconensis* is perhaps Pettau or Salzburg. The names and places appearing upon the document deserve notice. Ingenuinus *ecclesiae Sabionensis* (Seben-Brixen), Maxentius *Iuliensis* (Zuglio near Tolmezzo in the Province of Udine), Laurentius *Bellunatae* (Belluno), Augustus *Concordiensis* (Concordia, near Mirandola), Agnellus *Treientinae* (Trent), Agnellus *Acelinae* (Asolo in the Province of Treviso), Junior *Veronensis* (Verona), Fonteius *Feltrinae* (Feltre), Felix *Tervisianae* (Treviso), Horontius *Vicentinae* (Vicenza).

The answer of the Emperor Mauritius was a letter sent to the Pope in 591, in which the latter is commanded not to "disturb the Bishops of the Istrian Provinces," but to leave them alone until peace is re-established in the land of Italy, and the whole Church province again restored to the Roman Empire.[2]

Hence the schismatics were, for the nonce, victorious.

Meanwhile the anticipated overthrow of the Lombards and

[1] The letter is cited on p. 164, note 1. The Emperor speaks of the authors as "*episcopi civitatum et castrorum, quos Langobardi tenere dinoscuntur*"; see his letter to Gregory the Great, *Reg.*, 1, n. 16[b]; cp. MOMMSEN, *Neues Archiv*, 17, 189; MANSI, 10, 467. Cp. HEFELE, 2, 919 ff.

[2] See previous note.

the restoration of the subjugated provinces to the Empire remained a dream. The political outlook for the Byzantines, instead of improving, grew worse. Many of the separated Bishops, taught by sad experience, changed their attitude and sought reunion with Rome. Some of the ten names mentioned above belong to Bishops who were eventually highly esteemed by the Catholics of their regions, and whose subsequent reconciliation with Rome may therefore be assumed. What was then of most consequence was to heal the wounds of war, and to make the new political situation, which now had come to stay, more endurable by converting the Lombards. These urgent, practical tasks turned the thoughts of the Bishops from dreary discussions regarding the Three Chapters. It opened a wide field for charity, and it was Catholic charity which slowly and gradually healed the breach which had so unnecessarily added a spiritual misfortune to the dreadful hardships of the age.

# V.—PROGRESSIVE DECLINE OF CIVIL ORDER AND ROMAN CULTURE—SIGNS OF LIFE IN THE ROMAN CHURCH

# CHAPTER I

## DECLINE AND COLLAPSE OF CIVIL LIFE

### Byzantium—North Africa—Mohammed

445. The close of the ancient Roman World is marked by deep shadows resulting from the irreparable injuries wrought in public affairs both within and without the Empire by outward misfortunes and by the growth of old-standing internal abuses.

Impending ruin came steadily nearer. On the one hand, barbarism and tyranny, unbridled force, and love of war were predominant in the fresh political combinations which were being formed in the West upon the wreck of the ancient structure. Of this the Lombard rule in Italy was the most terrible instance. On the other hand, in the Roman, or, rather, Byzantine Empire, obsolete systems and outworn forms continued to be observed, of which the only purpose was self-interest, and the sole result the dissolution of the great family of nations.

To realise the impotence of the huge Byzantine Empire, we have only to think of its utter helplessness at the time of the Lombard incursions; the lack of united action on the part of the civil officials and military commanders in Italy; the want of plan and of any understanding of the social needs of the country and of the efforts of the Church; in a word, the political and social feebleness of the Government in a province of such immense importance to the Empire, the very Pearl of the West. We can well foresee how utterly unable it will be to cope with the inroads of Mohammedanism.

Another disturbing factor was the uncertainty of the succession to the throne both in the Empire and in the countries outside it. This struck at the vitals of State coherence, and foreboded ill for union and internal strength. Where the highest authority is constantly exposed to violence in its transmission, the political ground becomes unstable.

Paying closer attention to these premonitory symptoms of the

general downfall of the political world, we obtain a yet clearer view of the Church's action and of the power displayed by her at this juncture. The Church was the only institution not convulsed by the overthrow of the ancient world. On the contrary, she progressively unfolded new organisations for the salvation of spiritual goods, strengthening her hold by increasing the authority of the Bishops, and above all of the See of Rome. There, in the Eternal City, in which lies the fate of all nations, she worked, little by little, replacing the crumbling political coalition by a union based on religion.

446. In the rotten Byzantine Empire, uncertainty in the succession to the throne was an evil of long standing. At Byzantium, for 160 years, from 450 to 610, no son ever succeeded his father; on two occasions the succession fell to nephews, and on two occasions likewise to sons-in-law. Otherwise the crown was in the bestowal of the army or of the scheming women and eunuchs of the palace.

When **Justin I.**, in 518, desired to become Emperor, he had to bribe the Imperial body-guard with the same amount as he had himself accepted for promoting the cause of another candidate for the throne.

When his sister's enterprising son, **Justinian**, had obtained the reins of power, he did not scruple to disgrace the crown by requiring all, throughout the Empire, to take the oath of fealty to Theodora, his wife, a former actress and prostitute, now his consort on the throne. In spite of the glamour of his conquests and the fame of his legislation, Justinian succeeded in restoring very little of its vanished spirit to the body of the State. The fate of the countries conquered by this Emperor was not enviable, sucked dry as they were by extortionate and tyrannical bureaucrats.

No improvement occurred under his immediate successors. **Justin II.** was too old, and too helpless in the hands of his wife, Sophia, to arrest the disorders among his officials; he did nothing to restore the finances or to reduce the exorbitant taxation; nor did he hinder the sale of pardons to malefactors, and the putting up to auction of public offices. In the Imperial army barbarian recruits were being admitted in ever-increasing numbers, for the absence of regular pay was no inducement to subjects to take up a military career.

The Emperor **Tiberius**, the husband of Sophia's daughter, who ascended the Imperial throne in 578, was a valiant soldier. A Thracian accustomed to war, he stopped the Persians, whose advance had struck the Empire with terror; but the long wars he had to wage were unfavourable to the improvement of conditions at home.

Finally **Mauritius**, husband of Tiberius's daughter, Constantina, may with even better right be called a strong and capable ruler. Yet in his case, too, the advantages gained were principally of a military order. He secured the capital of the Byzantine Empire against the Avars, who, since the departure of the Lombards, had established themselves in the long stretch of country between Constantinople and what is now called Belgrad. The victory at Adrianople in 587, and the death of Baian, the dreaded King of the Avars (602), crowned the success of the Emperor Mauritius. Subsequently, however, in his efforts to save expenditure he issued an edict which brought his reign to a sanguinary end. The soldiers refused to allow the cost of their arms and uniforms to be deducted from their pay. They raised the brutal, cruel, centurion **Phocas** to the throne, and Mauritius, together with his family, was barbarously done to death in his own capital.

That the Empire held together, in spite of all the storms within and without, is to some extent due to its own inertia. Its frame was too huge and the conservatism of the vast mass was too powerful, to allow of an immediate collapse. It is a testimony to the genius enshrined in Roman institutions that they should have existed so long, and that the Byzantine Empire, in spite of its hopeless internal corruption, did not fall to pieces sooner.

447. If we turn from Constantinople to the once flourishing Provinces of **North Africa**, we find the ruins caused by wars waged there by the Empire, and by maladministration.

It certainly was a dazzling triumph when, in 533, Belisarius, after the overthrow of the Vandal kingdom, brought its King Gelimer as a captive in his train to the Hippodrome at Constantinople. With the King were the leading Vandals, arrayed in all their finery, and all the incalculable treasures of Carthage —that booty which the Vandals had once wrenched from Rome and the rich cities of the Mediterranean. The Roman palace of

the Palatine now restored to the throne of Byzantium the Imperial furniture carried off by the Vandals.

Yet, however loud the shouts of triumph might resound through the Hippodrome, a long period of great distress was now beginning both for the Roman inhabitants of the North-African provinces and for such of the Vandals as had not enlisted in the army. Procopius tells us of repeated risings of the oppressed inhabitants, acting conjointly with the Moors, who had been angered by the bad faith of the Byzantines. He also gives some fearful accounts of the devastations, bloodshed, and pillage. His work on the fall of the Vandals ends with the following words: "The population of Africa was frightfully reduced. A few only were left. After great tribulations, they had indeed secured peace, but all were beggars."[1]

Both from the ecclesiastical and the political point of view, the blow struck at North Africa by what it had undergone was too severe to allow these regions, which had been with so much difficulty reduced to order, ever to become prosperous again. Exhaustion and depopulation rendered it easy in the next century for Arab hordes to overrun the provinces, and, in 698, Carthage passed under the yoke of the Moslem.

The movement stirred up by **Mohammed** was to be a new and frightful scourge for the Byzantine Empire. Its fanaticism, to which it owed its irresistible power, was directed against all surrounding countries which bore the name of Christian. Mohammed, with his pretended revelations and his blind hatred of Christian civilisation, came to complete the misfortunes of the period which had begun with the invasion of the barbarians. His warrior hosts, recruited from the deserts, did on the eastern borders of the Byzantine territories what the barbarians of the North had done in the Western Roman Empire. The barbarians, however, in course of time bowed down before the Cross, and made peace with their new subjects, whose civilisation they adopted. On the other hand, Mohammed and his disciples stood for the denial of the Christian faith, against all admixture with its supporters, and for the destruction of all Christian ethics.

Mohammedan morality was mere sensuality, its only civilisation was that of the fanatic's sword, and its tenets, which denied

[1] *De bello vandalico*, 2, c. 28.

the Trinity, and the divinity of Christ, were the negation of all that formed the religious foundation upon which the world was established.

The birth of the anti-Christian prophet occurred somewhere about the year 570, hence at a time when Gregory the Great, who was to be the strongest realisation of the saving and restoring power of the Church in early mediæval ages, was yet in his youth.

## Spain—The Frankish Realms—England

448. Continuing our survey, we find in **Spain,** towards the end of the sixth century, the gifted nation of the Visigoths on the point of entering the Church.

Before their conversion, however, the ancient enmity between the Arian intruders and the Latin population once more asserted itself, and led to a sharp persecution. King Leuvigild, who deserves the name of a cruel persecutor, was a distinguished soldier in the field and famous for his strength as a ruler. His constant aim was to break the might of the Byzantines in the country, and he did in fact expel them from all their possessions save from a few seaports to the south and east. His home policy was, however, less well advised, and clearly proved how impossible it was to establish the Visigothic nation on any other basis than that of the one true religion and of submission to the Church of Peter.

Leuvigild sought to attain his object by laying undue stress on the monarchical principle, and on these lines he enacted fresh laws. Regal pomp was his delight. He was wont to appear in the Imperial purple, and, when surrounded by his nobles, to be seated on a lofty throne. He also tried to make his monarchy hereditary, as the want of any settled order of succession to the throne had been bitterly felt in the country. On account of the turbulence of the nobles the succession was not only insecure, but was almost always an occasion for bloodshed. Amalric, Theudes, Theudegesil, and Agila, all of them kings, had each in turn been murdered. Gregory of Tours exclaims in horror: "There it is now the custom that whoso wishes to be king must murder his predecessor." Leuvigild himself was the brother of King Liuva,

to whom Athanagild, who, in 567, had, strange to relate, died a natural death, bequeathed the throne.[1]

In order, therefore, to defeat the old elective principle, and keep the crown in his own family, Leuvigild, in 572, assumed as co-regents the two sons of his first marriage, Hermenegild and Reccared. At the same time he took steps to encourage the profession of Arianism, which he fancied would help to knit together the kingdom. Hermenegild was, however, won over to Catholicism by his wife, Ingunda, an Austrasian, and soon became the centre of the struggle between Arians and Catholics.

Goswintha, the King's second wife, was the person mainly responsible for the fierce persecution which followed.

A Reign of Terror now began for the Latins who remained faithful to their Church, and for all who, like Hermenegild, endeavoured to protect them. Against the Catholics King Leuvigild made use of the weapons of exile, pillage, and starvation. Nothing but apostasy would satisfy the sovereign. Just as in the days of the first martyrs, sung so touchingly by the Spaniard Prudentius, the public prisons were again thronged. Many were scourged and died under torture. Even Bishops were seized and maltreated, most of them being driven into exile. At the same time every snare was set to tempt the Catholics, and promises, added to fear, were, unfortunately, not without result.

Hermenegild was ultimately executed by his royal father, but sufficient blood had now flowed, and Leuvigild's son, Reccared, lost no time in seeking a better foundation for the distracted and almost ruined kingdom of the Visigoths. He set the example of conversion, and, by wise measures, gradually brought the bulk of his people into the pale of the Catholic Church.

449. The position of matters in **Gaul** during the sixth century did not differ materially from that in Spain. There was there the same uncertainty concerning the newly founded thrones, the same political upheavals, and the same pretension to power on the part of the Merovingian kinglets, who, to quote a leading German historian, "might well have been Byzantine Emperors or despots of the East."[2]

[1] GREG. TUR., *Hist. Franc.*, 3, c. 30, speaks of regicide as popular among the Goths: "*Sumpserunt enim Gothi hanc detestabilem consuetudinem*," &c.

[2] G. WAITZ, *Deutsche Verfassungsgesch.*[3], 2, 1, 198.

In Gaul, indeed, the Church was not hampered by Arianism. Sovereign and subject professed Catholicism. The ancient Catholic bishoprics were still in existence, Councils were held, and monasteries were rising in great numbers.

Yet the Church lacked liberty and a congenial atmosphere. The Bishops were some of them feeble and worldly, and they were fettered in their action by the interference of the Kings. It had gradually become the custom for the monarchs, themselves utterly unlettered men, to rule their country's Church. Here, less than anywhere else, were the oppressed and subservient clergy capable of doing justice to the social problems of the day.

The splitting up of Chlodovec's great monarchy into four parts, an event which followed his death in 511, and the fierce dissensions prevailing in the Merovingian royal family, readily paved the way for despotism on the part of the sovereign, lawlessness on that of the people, and for deterioration in the body clerical. It is true that the separated portions of the Frankish kingdom were again united in 558 under Chlotar I., but only for four years. After this King's death a fresh division among his sons again led to the establishment of four kingdoms, of Austrasia under Siegbert I., of Burgundy under Guntram, of Neustria under Chilperic I., and of Paris under Charibert. The latter, however, on the early death of its sovereign, was divided among his three remaining brothers.

Of the three, Chilperic I. was a good specimen of that overbearing and cruel character so often found among the Merovingians. He was a libertine, like others of his royal rank, but none revelled more than he in the intoxication of feeling supreme. He wished to ape the greatest of the ancient Emperors. Not only did he drape his shoulders with the Imperial purple and sit in a curule chair, but he also dictated verses like Nero, imposed taxes like Justinian, and even added to the alphabet several new letters of his own invention. Books, written ages before, he had erased with pumice-stone and corrected. In a sudden freak he passed a law compelling all the Jews in his kingdom to be baptized on a certain day. Any one who dared to oppose his will was sure of being despoiled of his belongings; the refractory had their houses pulled down, their fields and vineyards destroyed. Anything

which recalled his father, whom he hated, he could not bear to see standing. He reviled the Bishops, and such courtiers as ventured to expostulate were threatened with the loss of their eyes. Gregory, Bishop of Tours, his contemporary, compares for cruelty his long reign of three-and-twenty years with those of Nero and Herod.[1]

This same Bishop, one of the few brave and zealous members of the Frankish Episcopate, was forced personally to oppose King Chilperic when the latter, in his presumption, trenched upon the domain of dogma and impugned the doctrine of the Trinity, urging that to admit Three Persons was inconsistent. The Bishop of Albia (Albi) gave his support to his brother of Tours, declaring that he was ready to rend the obnoxious decree before the King's eyes.[2]

Some of the atrocities with which Chilperic is charged must partly be laid to the account of that fury, Fredegunda, who married him as her last husband. Nevertheless his own readiness to spill blood, and his murders, were so notorious that Gregory of Tours, when relating his tragic end, scarcely conceals his satisfaction at the death of one whose many crimes had long seemed deserving of such a fate.

450. Fredegunda now went to Paris, and put herself under the protection of King Guntram. But Childebert of Austrasia, her deadly enemy, sent an embassy to Guntram with the demand, in itself alone descriptive of those unhappy years in Gaul: "Hand me that woman, that evil-doer who slew my aunt, my father, my uncle, and my nephews." These were but a few of the victims sacrificed to the ambition and hatred of this woman, who had risen to the throne from the rank of a servant. She stood alone in cunning and cruelty. She may, indeed, be compared to the famous Brunhilda of Austrasia, so far as craft and resolution were concerned, but impartial history knows Brunhilda to have been far less steeped in crime.

[1] GREG. TUR., *Hist. Franc.*, 5, c. 45, criticises Chilperic's poetry rather severely: "*Versiculi illi nulli penitus metricae conveniunt rationi.*" Ibid. on the correction of the books: "*ut sic libri antiquitus scripti, planati pumice, rescriberentur.*" On the King's cruelty, ibid., 6, c. 46: "*Nero nostri temporis et Herodes.*" Waitz justly observes that Chilperic's government was most un-German.

[2] GREG. TUR., 5, c. 45, says of the King's foolish efforts to reform the doctrine of the Trinity: "*Chilpericus rex scripsit indiculum, ut sancta Trinitas non in personarum distinctione sed tantum Deus nominaretur . . . affirmans etiam ipsum esse Patrem, qui est Filius, itemque ipsum esse Spiritum sanctum, qui Pater et Filius.*"

Guntram, Fredegunda's protector in Paris, was one of the sovereigns least implicated in deeds of violence; at any rate he made some effort to atone for his outbursts of tyranny and rage by good works, and especially pious foundations. So far removed was he, however, from the conception of a wise and moderate ruler, that, for instance, he exterminated the family of a disgraced nobleman to the ninth degree of kinship to protect himself from the vengeance of any relative.

When Guntram took possession of Paris (584) his appeal to the people assembled in the church was in the following significant words: "I beg of you all, men and women, assembled here to-day, break not your oath of fealty and slay me not, as you lately did my brothers." In the following year, the nobles who lamented the condition of affairs presented a petition to the King, in which, among other things, they say openly: "The people are sunk in vice, and each one does what he pleases. No one fears the King, nor has any respect for princes and counts. If any one tries to improve matters, he at once meets opposition and violence. Those only are safe who hold their tongues and let things go their way."[1]

The descendants of the great Chlodovec were but a puny race. They were unfit to govern themselves, let alone the realm. They were unable to stem the turbulence of the nobles and the lawlessness of the masses. They were constantly risking their thrones through caprice and cruelty, and, instead of utilising the Church for the benefit of their subjects, hampered her by jealousy and tyranny. The decline of the ancient world is writ with blood in the history of those Gallic provinces, once so forward in civilisation and culture.

Amidst all these sad signs of the times the observer is, however, comforted by the knowledge that the disorder and unsettlement was largely confined to the sovereigns and nobility. It is clear that the people generally, in their humble way, sought to hold fast to the true treasure of the nation—to their inherited morality, honesty, and love of work, and the practices of religion. This can be seen from numerous little incidents from Frankish home life, with which the Bishop of Tours has interspersed his narratives. The same writer has also left us edifying pictures of

[1] GREG. TUR., 7, c. 8, Guntram's speech: "*Mihi fidem inviolatam servare dignemini, nec me, ut fratres meos nuper fecistis, interematis.*" The nobles' petition, ibid., 8, c. 30.

saintly men and women who sustained the inhabitants of the country during the disturbances of the age, and who, by the wonders they worked and by their teaching, brightened with wholesome light the darkness of those years. To whom save unto such did the Frankish nation owe that inward force which in later times fitted it for such great deeds?[1]

451. In **England**, too, Roman rule was to be engulfed amid a storm of misfortune and distress, while the new Germanic system of government was to prevail only after much civil war and many excesses on the part of the chiefs. Here, too, we find remnants of early culture, mingled with the barbarity and heathen savagery of the invaders. Christian civilisation, which had early made its way here, now flickered dimly and threatened soon to be entirely extinguished.

The Angles, Jutes, and Saxons, under Hengist and Horsa, mere hardy warriors and seamen so graphically described by Sidonius Apollinaris, made short work of the ancient Britons, and of what Roman civilisation still existed in the land, but they were utterly unable to re-establish the country on a better footing. Civilisation and morality were driven into the fastnesses of Wales, where the aboriginal inhabitants maintained their independence, their language, their religion, and their old customs. In the conquered southern portion of Britain, amidst the ruins of the Roman provinces, arose the petty Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, subsequently known as the Heptarchy, which, pervaded by the spirit of Paganism, consumed their strength in mutual feud, and in the effort to enlarge their boundaries at each other's expense.[2]

Gildas, about the year 560, describes with grief and high-flown rhetoric in his "Book of Complaints" (*Liber querulus*), the endless distress brought upon his country by the invaders: "From sea to sea the flames raged, consuming country and city, and ceasing not till all was turned into ashes. Peasants and princes, people and priests, were all put to the sword. In the streets lay the pinnacles of towers, and overturned altars, surrounded by half-burnt bodies. Whoever escaped the sword, perished by famine, or fled beyond the seas." He gives an equally lurid

[1] Cp. LOEBELL, *Gregor von Tours und seine Zeit*[2], pp. 35 ff., 253 ff.
[2] SIDONIUS, *Ep.* 8, n. 6, ed. KRUSCH (*Mon. Germ. hist.*, 4, pars 2), p. 132.

sketch of the moral and social conditions of his country during the sixth century. Were only part of what he says actually true, it would yet show how deep-seated and pitiable was the corruption consequent upon the invasion: "Britain has kings, but they are tyrants; she has judges, but they are godless, they punish the guiltless and protect the robbers. . . . She has priests, but they are ignorant; clerics, but they are scoundrels; pastors, but they are wolves, who rend their own flocks." [1]

452. **St. Columban,** that great Irishman, who died in 615, at the sight of the desolation, both material and moral, which pervaded the whole North, was also moved to expect the approaching collapse of the world. With his own eyes he had seen the misery prevailing in the British Isles, and during his travels he had also become acquainted with the similar state of affairs among the Franks; he himself had experienced the royal displeasure in Gaul, and by command of the King had been driven out of the monastery at Luxovium (Luxeuil), which he had taken endless trouble to build amidst the ruins of a castle and baths belonging to Roman times. He had finally found shelter among the Lombards of Northern Italy, where he founded the conventual house of Bobbio, which, in the future, was to be the centre of Christian culture for this people and the vast surrounding territories.

Seeing how dark was the future, Columban, in a letter to the Pope, exclaims: "The world is already falling to pieces. The Shepherd of shepherds is about to come for the last time . . . The Lord of Heaven seeks to rouse us from sleep and slothfulness by the horrors which surround us, that He may find us watching for His dreadful Coming. . . See how the nations are everywhere troubled and in confusion, see how the kingdoms of the world are falling. Soon the voice of the Most High will be heard, and the earth will quake before Him." [2]

The Saint, whose foresight was otherwise admirable, in his agitation, believes in the imminence of the end of all things. Such was the impression made by the calamities accompanying

[1] *Liber querulus de excidio Britanniae*, pars 1, c. 24; *P.L.*, LXIX., 346. Ibid., pars 2, c. 1: "*Reges habet Britannia, sed tyrannos, iudices habet, sed impios.*" Pars 3, c. 1: "*Sacerdotes habet Britannia, sed insipientes,*" &c. *P.L.*, LXIX., 347, 367.

[2] *Ep.* 5 *ad Bonifatium IV.; P.L.*, LXXX., 276, 277. Ed. GUNDLACH (*Mon. Germ. hist. Epp. merov. et carolini aevi*, 1), p. 5.

the downfall of the ancient Roman world, even on those who were mentally in advance of their time.

Columban, in his anxiety, turned his eyes towards Rome. There he still saw the focus of mankind, the heart which sends the life-blood of the spirit coursing through the world. With the utmost reverence he calls the Church of Rome the "chief seat of the true faith, the head of all the Churches in the world." "We are," he writes, "the bondmen of the chair of Peter. Though Rome as a city is great and renowned throughout the wide world, to us she seems great and brilliant because of her Apostolic throne."[1]

To Columban, Rome appears set as a lighthouse amid the tempest of destruction. This accounts for his anxiety, aroused by reports which have penetrated even into his solitude at Bobbio, concerning the attitude of the Popes towards the matter of the Three Chapters. They were erroneous and spiteful rumours circulated by foes of the Council of Constantinople, and false charges against Pope Vigilius, which at that time were constantly being made at the Lombard Court. Columban, whose temper was not of the sweetest, and who, in this matter, was prejudiced, could not bring himself to see anything save an injustice in the condemnation of the Three Chapters. The strong language he uses in his letters to the Pope against the opponents of the Chapters, and against what he considered an ill-advised action on the part of Rome, demonstrate afresh his conviction of the supremacy of the Roman See, of which the decisions should be above suspicion, seeing that obedience is demanded of all.[2]

453. The world of that day, in the midst of its decay and dissolution, received, however, abundant spiritual aid from Rome, and it was not in vain that men like Columban looked thither for enlightenment on the difficult questions then being mooted, and for the safeguarding of those supernatural doctrines which guide

[1] Ibid.; *P.L.*, LXXX., 274 ff., 278; GUNDLACH, 174: "*Nos enim, ut ante dixi, devincti sumus cathedrae sancti Petri. Licet enim Roma magna est et vulgata, per istam cathedram tantum apud nos est magna et clara.*"

[2] "His language is a proof that the constitution of the Church does not, as its opponents fancy, foster a slavish state of mind, but that dignified freedom is compatible with respect and veneration for the Superiors of the Church." Such is the excellent inference drawn by FUNK, *Zur Gesch. der altbritischen Kirche* (*Hist. Jahrb.*, 4, 1883, 5 ff.), p. 17. Cp. his *Kirchengesch. Abh.*, 1 (1897), 431.

men safely through the perplexities of life. Not only did the Roman See, under the watchful care of Christ, shed the light of true doctrine over the faithful in distress, but it also infused strength and courage through the channel of the Bishops who obeyed it. It was in those very ages that the Holy See began to send in greater numbers its own Roman missionaries to foreign parts to bring unbelieving nations to share in the salvation of the Church, and to awaken fresh life in regions where Christianity was moribund. Those were also years during which Rome's power of attraction increased in every direction, and pilgrims from all lands flocked to the Eternal City, to gain new spiritual strength, to invigorate their consciousness of unity, and to study the customs of the Roman Church so as to be able to introduce them at home.

Instead of the end of the world, which was momentarily expected, many Christian ages were yet to come, while from the ruins of antiquity, with the help of Rome, was to emerge the mediæval system, distinguished by its Christianity in faith and action. But of what was to come no one had the slightest inkling. On the contrary, everywhere, even in the works of Gregory the Great we are confronted by utterances concerning the approaching end of the world. This we can explain only by reflecting there was a world, *viz.* the ancient Roman world, which was really on the point of being submerged, and that even the greatest minds were unable to rise superior to the dismal influences which surrounded them.

"The World is passing away," exclaims Avitus, the famous Bishop of Vienne, whose only consolation is his knowledge that at any rate Rome still stands with her institutions intact.[1]

The inscription which John III. put up in Rome's new Church of the Apostles says: "Amidst universal misery the Pope was ever generous, nor did he lose heart when the world failed."[2]

We even hear authors complaining that literary work has become difficult because the world is dying. Writing books, so we are told, has become an unprofitable task.

The writer known as Fredegarius, at the beginning of his chronicle, makes such a confession with the utmost simplicity.

[1] *Ep.* 34, ed. PEIPER (*Mon. Germ. hist., Auctt. antt.*, 6, pars 2), p. 64.

[2] "*Largior existens angusto in tempore praesul | Despexit mundo deficiente premi.*" DE ROSSI, *Inscr. christ.*, 2, 1, pp. 65, 258, 355. Cp. above, p. 91, note 1.

He bewails the relaxation of mental power ; no one can now hope to emulate the writers of yore. Seeing that the last days have come, he has no hesitation in admitting his rusticity and his limitations. His literary style certainly bears out his opening statement, being awkward and extremely poor.[1]

[1] Chronicle written in 642. WATTENBACH, *Geschichtsquellen*[6], I, 106.

## CHAPTER II

### THE END OF ROMAN CULTURE—CHRONICLES, FORGERIES, AND LEGENDS

### Authors and Schools

454. Though the unhappy state of the times in the sixth century had entailed a lamentable neglect of study and of olden culture, even then there were men of distinction, who, after having made the literary treasures of antiquity their own by dogged study, devotedly applied them to the benefit of their contemporaries and of generations yet to come. Men so great as Boethius, the Senator, so learned and many-sided as Cassiodorus ; men who were both scholars and churchmen, such as Cæsarius of Arles, and Ennodius of Pavia ; poets like Venantius Fortunatus ; finally, historians like Gregory of Tours, to say nothing of a Gregory the Great, who deserves to be reckoned among the greatest of the Fathers, all these names remind us that the period of decaying Roman civilisation, which we are studying, was not wholly deficient in powerful minds, more or less imbued with the classical spirit, which preserved the inheritance of ancient culture. Only to the strenuous exertions of Christians, and the spiritual impulse maintained among mankind by the new Heaven-sent Religion do we owe it that those ages found any pleasure in the classics of antiquity and did not allow them to be irrevocably lost to the future.[1]

People still read and studied, and, especially in the monasteries now springing up, devoted themselves with serious effort to the pursuit of knowledge ; but there existed no longer the same public and social incentive to original work, and, above all, amidst the unutterable misfortunes which had swept over the face of the

[1] H. Richter, *Das weströmische Reich* (Berlin, 1865), p. 23 : "Without Christianity neither German nor Roman would ever have acquired that taste for ancient classics which had been lost by their immediate predecessors, against whose degeneracy Christianity had to struggle. Christian hands alone saved those remains for a more appreciative posterity."

civilised world, the necessary means for study were frequently lacking.

But already Cassian of Massilia had sought to give a scholarly tendency to the labours of the monks in their silent cells; and just as Cassiodorus had strongly advised the pursuit of knowledge in the monasteries of Italy, so Cæsarius, the celebrated Bishop of Arles, strove also to create new abodes of learning wherever ascetics dwelt. Cæsarius expressly reckons the copying of books as one of the duties which monks by their profession are bound to perform. The earliest known Rule for convents of women, *viz.* the treatise *Ad virgines*, compiled by St. Cæsarius in 513, obliges even nuns to copy books. Cæsaria, the sister of Cæsarius, who ruled the nunnery founded by her brother, was herself a lady of education.

455. In the matter of education and culture in the early portion of the sixth century, the southern provinces of Gaul were the best provided. Indeed Gaul, "far more than Italy the actual mother-country, seemed called to be the protectress of ancient civilisation. Overwhelmed by barbarians, with its abundance of monasteries, it has to its credit the glory of having for ages maintained the high standard of ancient culture for the benefit of mankind. The reason for this is clear: nowhere could minds be found more open to this culture than among the Romanised Celts."[1] The second place in this respect belongs to Northern Italy, which was distinguished for the intelligence and earnestness with which it followed ancient literary traditions. Ravenna, particularly, long remained one of the headquarters of ancient scholarship, even when the last successor of Theodoric the Goth, that broad-minded patron of Roman knowledge and art, had passed away. Many late works of art in Ravenna, and likewise in Arles and other cities of southern Gaul, belong to those years, and their forms, borrowed from the antique, with all their defects and their failure to reach the standards of earlier and better times, witness at least to an effort to retain as much as possible of what was good in former ages. Thus we find in art what we found in the literature of the period, *viz.* excellent intentions, but also the same traces of progressive incapacity. An example from the domain

[1] NORDEN, *Die antike Kunstprosa vom 6 Jahrh. v. Chr. bis in die Zeit der Renaissance* (1898), p. 631. In what follows we have also drawn largely on this work.

Ill. 209.—End of the Sarcophagus of Archbishop Theodore in Sant' Apollinare in Classe, near Ravenna.

of art is the sarcophagus of Archbishop Theodore of Ravenna (Ill. 209).[1] The bas-reliefs on each side are not devoid of taste and sense of form, but in the main they merely reproduce earlier designs, which the sculptor has, moreover, failed to apply correctly or to combine. The cross rests upon the old, classical lion's head, but the latter has been unduly flattened and the design lacks artistic consistency ; nor does the other cross on the chalice or cantharus, also adapted from an ancient pattern, look much better. The twining branches and the birds are also borrowed from early works, but they are more satisfactorily executed.

In the educated circles of Rome the treatment of ancient literary works was somewhat similar. The classics were not only copied, but learnt by heart and expounded. People sought, with more or less success, to imitate them, both in secular works and in the expression of Christian conceptions. The favourite authors were Cicero, Livy, Pliny, Horace, Suetonius, and Seneca. But the most prized of all, and the most indispensable in the schools, was and remained Virgil.

## Virgil as Moulder of the Middle Ages

456. The poet Virgil was everywhere chosen in preference to all other classic writers for the training of young people, on account of his clear and elegant language, the gentle cadence of his verse, and the pure and spiritual tone which pervades his whole work. The educational influence of Virgil on the Middle Ages was enormous. Mankind may thank him for a large part of the taste and feeling it acquired in the schools. The very ideas and images current in those ages betray the study of that poet, whose *Æneid* was the most popular school-book of mediæval times.[2]

During the sixth century every educated monk, cleric, and layman was well acquainted with the fate of Troy, and with the adventures of Rome's first father, in all the lively colours with which the imagination of the Mantuan poet had invested them, a fact which naturally added even more to the esteem in which Rome was held. Gregory of Tours, speaking of Andarchius, an

[1] Photo. by Alinari. Cp. KRAUS, *Gesch. der christl. Kunst*, I, p. 253.

[2] COMPARETTI, *Virgilio nel medio evo*[2] (1896), I, p. 99, on the sixth century; p. 159 ff., on grammatical and rhetorical studies in the early Middle Ages.

officer of the Court of King Sigibert, and wishing to show how educated he was, says: "He was perfectly at home in the works of Virgil, in the books of the Theodosian Code, and in arithmetic."[1]

Gregory of Tours, by his quotations and language, shows clearly enough that he himself, in the Frankish schools of the sixth century, had not only read the *Æneid*, but had also familiarised himself with the *Georgica* and *Bucolica*. He must also have read many other ancient authors, for he sometimes recalls Gellius, Pliny, and even Servius, the commentator of Virgil.[2]

From the sixth century dates a remarkable poetical production entitled, *Cento vergilianus de ecclesia*, of which the author is thought to be Mavortius. Therein the poet, in words and phrases often borrowed literally from Virgil, recounts the life of Christ, the foundation of the Church, and even her customs—for instance, the liturgy in the Basilicas. In the latter highly instructive passages, he describes the faithful assembled "beneath a vast roof, sustained by a hundred columns," and the "sacerdos" holding forth. Even the preacher steals his texts from Virgil's storehouse, and, from the ambo, bids his hearers "learn righteousness, *Discite iustitiam moniti*," though, instead of concluding, as Virgil does: "And despise not the gods," he says, "And cherish and value your Hope."[3]

When, in accordance with ancient custom, the poet publicly recited his production, the assembly rewarded him with cries of "*Maro iunior! Maro iunior!*" which he acknowledged without further ado by six improvised verses. We can scarcely fail to be reminded of the poets' celebrations in the Basilica Ulpia on Trajan's Forum, and of Arator's recitation in the church of St. Peter *ad vincula*.[4]

Mavortius, the ready versifier, whose life is quite unknown, also composed a similar Virgilian cento on the Judgment of Paris the son of Priam. We see thereby how, in the orations and literature of those days, spiritual subjects were mingled with profane.[5]

[1] *Hist. Franc.*, 4, c. 47 (48).

[2] See MANITIUS, *Neues Archiv*, 21, 549. Bonnet devoted an excellent work to the Latin of Gregory of Tours: *Le latin de Grégoire de Tours*, Paris, 1890.

[3] *Cento vergil.*, ed. SCHENKL (*Corp. script. eccl. Vindob.*, t. 16). On the Liturgy, see p. 621.

[4] EBERT, *Gesch. der Lit. des MA. im Abendlande*[2], 1 (1889), 432. The public recitations with applause, or the reverse, is alluded to by ENNODIUS, *Carm.* 1, n. 9, Praef.: "*Cur recitet publice, quem laus nec decet publica nec delectat.*"

[5] Ed. RIESE (*Anthologia latina*, 1, n. 10), ed. BÄHRENS (*Poetae latini minores*, 4, n. 200).

Nor was it anything new or unusual that a minor poet should thus borrow inspiration from Virgil. For a long time past all were glad to array themselves with tags from the mantle of the favourite poet of old Rome. Ausonius, the Pagan, had already compiled a *Cento nuptialis* in verses from Virgil. There also exists a Christian Virgilian cento composed as early as the fourth century by the poetess Proba, and another of the fifth century—the *Vergiliana Continentia.* Proba was the wife of Adelphius the Proconsul, City Prefect of Rome in 351, and she must not be confounded, as she so often has been, with Anicia Faltonia Proba. Her work, consisting of 694 hexameters, deals with subjects from the Old and the New Testaments, which she endeavours to sing in the grand style of Virgil. During the Middle Ages Proba was often used in the schools side by side with Virgil. In the *Vergiliana Continentia* of the next century the effort to imitate Virgil is carried even further. The author, Fabius Planciades Fulgentius, an African, actually seeks to give an allegorical interpretation of the *Æneid*—an unlucky attempt, resulting in a distorted work which rightly found little favour.[1]

In the fourth century the famous passage in Virgil's fourth Eclogue, concerning the restoration of the world and the wonderful child, had come to be understood Messianically, as applying to Christ and His religion.

The words which Virgil professed to have received from the mouth of the Cumæan Sibyl, sounded too tempting to credulous and enthusiastic Christians not to be at once accepted as a Pagan prophecy of the coming Saviour of the world. The reverence in which the great poet was held as a trainer and educator of the young was even deepened by the persuasion that he was in some sense a prophet of Christ. Dante, who is well known as an admirer of Virgil, accepts the early mediæval tradition, and takes the passage in the fourth Eclogue as a prediction of Christ. Pope Innocent III., in one of his sermons, also expounds the poem after the same fashion.[2]

At Zamora in Spain, in the twelfth century, Virgil was given a place in the stalls of the choir among the Old Testament prophets,

[1] On Proba, see EBERT, 125 ff. On Fabius Planciades Fulgentius, a relative of the Bishop and author Fulgentius, cp. TEUFFEL, *Gesch. der röm. Lit.*, 5. ed. SCHWABE (1890), p. 1238.

[2] On the traditional Christian interpretation of the Eclogue, see COMPARETTI, 1, 133 ff. DANTE, *Purg.*, 22, v. 67 ff. INNOCENT III, *Serm.* 2 *in festo nativ.*

the word PROGENIES showing the allusion to the Cumæan prophecy. Even to this day in Rome Raffaele's Cumæan Sibyl in Sta. Maria della Pace holds in her hand a scroll which speaks of the "new race, descending from Heaven." In the Middle Ages it was even told how St. Paul himself had made his pilgrimage to Virgil's tomb near Naples, and how he had wept bitterly over it at the thought that he had not been able to meet the poet in this world and convert him. St. Paul's lament was even preserved in a hymn formerly sung in the poet's native city, in which the Apostle is made to say :—

"How warm had been my embrace,
Had I met thee face to face,
Greatest of bards!"[1]

## Ennodius—Fortunatus

457. Magnus Felix Ennodius, Bishop of Pavia, in his works introduces us to those distinguished circles in Rome which, during the Gothic period in the sixth century, gave themselves up to literary pursuits.

A man of high culture and practical experience, during his long residence there, he had come to know the City of Rome and its society. He mentions a series of men distinguished for their eloquence: Faustus, Avienus, Symmachus, Festus, Agapetus, Probus, Probinus, and Cethegus, and even two women: Domna Barbara, "that flower of Roman intellect," and Stephania, "the most brilliant light of the Catholic Church."[2]

Ennodius, who delighted in good panegyrics, gives us this list in the *Paraenesis didascalica* which he wrote for two youths as a

[1] COMPARETTI, I, 132. The hymn in DANIEL, *Thes. hymn.*, 5, 266. The verse runs :

"*Quem te, inquit, reddidissem,*
*Si te vivum invenissem,*
*Poetarum maxime.*"

For the four Sibyls in Sta. Maria della Pace, see WEY, *Rome*, Eng. trans., p. 187.

[2] ENNODIUS, *Paraenesis didascalica*, to Ambrose and Beatus, written between 505 and 509. *P.L.*, LXIII., 254; ed. HARTEL, p. 408 ff. Parthenius, a nephew of Ennodius, was one of the many Gauls who at that time went to Rome for study. For his course of study, cp. the passages from Ennodius in the *Ind. nom.*, ed. HARTEL. Norden (p. 642) lays stress also upon the latter's letter to Simplicianus (7, n. 14) : "*in illa urbe litterarum scientia adstipulante laudaris. . . . Per alveum suum romanae eloquentiae unda praelabitur*," and quotes for rhetorical displays in Rome from Sidonius, *e.g. Ep.* 9, n. 14, 2 : "*dignus omnino, quem plausibilis Roma foveret ulnis, quoque recitante crepitantis Athenaei subsellia cuneata quaterentur.*" Cp. *Carm.*, 8, n. 9 ff., 9.

guide during their education. It is no model for students, but a rather superficial booklet with plentiful evidence of the decline in taste. Here as elsewhere decay is manifest in exaggeration and affectation—rocks on which degenerate literature of every period makes shipwreck. In this little book Ennodius launches forth into an inflated eulogy of the rhetorical art, which he seems to mistake for genuine eloquence. According to him, rhetoric rules the world. "Whoso uses our studies," he says, "controls the universe."[1]

Ennodius was also the author of some pompous little speeches for school use (*dictiones*) on subjects drawn from Rome's Pagan past, in which we find lengthy discourses of Dido to departing Æneas, the Lament of Thetis over the body of Achilles, and so forth. To him belongs also a speech to obtain free passage for the vestals and sacrificing priests from a conquered city. In a polished discourse which was to be delivered at the translation of a public hall (*auditorium*) to the Forum, he declared that a lecture-hall to the rhetorician was the same as the field of battle to the soldier, as the sea to the sailor, or the Forum to the advocate. "Arouse yourselves," he cries to the Romans, whose ardour he sees cooling, "be zealous, hasten to win the laurels of oratory, mindful of your fathers' renown." We may well believe, however, that the then Romans were in no mood to devote themselves to mere childish bombast. What, moreover, must sober readers have thought of Ennodius when they found him introducing into his poems, as a mouthpiece with which to praise the virtue of monks and nuns, no less a person than classic Cupid![2]

And yet, in spite of his foibles, Ennodius was a most worthy

[1] BOISSIER, *La fin du paganisme*, I (1891), 251 ff. EBERT, p. 439. Norden (*Die antike Kunstprosa*, p. 639) sums up the stylistic defects common to Ennodius's contemporaries as follows: "Any one who has read them knows that their prose . . . is often so distorted as to be quite unintelligible; that in important passages it is indistinguishable from poetry; that the words no longer occupy their proper places in the sentences; that bold neologisms are found side by side with archaisms; and that all sorts of word-play, and especially the favourite jingling endings, are used to an alarming degree. . . . Reminiscences of Sallust and Cicero in such a setting only increase the sense of incongruity." RICHTER (*Das weströmische Reich*, 1865, Intro.) very skilfully compares the literary degeneracy with that in art: "The inflated diction, far-fetched flowers of rhetoric, the aridity and combination of pettiness with exaggeration found in the works of the rhetors and sophists, were not without some connection with the empty parade of rambling palaces overladen with gold, the overgrown monuments and statues devoid of motive, or the grotesque appearance of the nobles in their robes of cloth of gold embroidered with silk, with animals and flowers, with their wigs and odd-coloured puffs."

[2] *Dictio quando ad forum translatio* (*auditorii*) *facta est.* In this we read: "*Hic nihil est tam familiare quam pompa dicendi. Currite, prosapiae stimulis incitati.*" On Cupid, *Epithal. Carm.*, IV.

and painstaking cleric and bishop. His pedantry and rhetoric were mere superficial decorations. After having embraced the clerical state, and, with her consent, placed his wife in a convent, he devoted himself to the love of God and the care of souls. He did not, however, relinquish his studies. Ennodius, moreover, could write with the utmost feeling and dignity when he fell in with a subject worthy of him. Such a theme was long provided him by the Church of Rome, when, in the course of the schism, he had to defend Pope Symmachus against the accusations of his antagonists. When called upon to do so, he was also equal to defending the Church with heroic self-sacrifice, as he did, for instance, on his second embassy to Constantinople, when he was made the butt of the contempt and violence of the Byzantines' prejudice against Rome. Full of good works for the Church, and much esteemed for his furtherance of the cause of education, he died in 521, with the reputation of a saintly Bishop.[1]

458. Some ten years later a Christian poet was born whose work faithfully reflects the literary life of the second half of the century. This was Venantius Honorius Clementianus **Fortunatus,** like Ennodius, a Bishop. In him, too, Rome's early culture survived, ennobled by Christianity.

Fortunatus was a man of great talents, and had been well trained at home in Tervisium (Treviso) in grammar, rhetoric, and law. In 565 he made a pilgrimage to the tomb of St. Martin of Tours, and after many wanderings settled down in Pictavium (Poitiers), where in a convent dedicated to the Holy Cross, dwelt his patronesses, Radegunda, the Thuringian Princess, and widow of the Frankish King Chlotar I., and her foster-child Agnes, both equally devoted to poetry and to silent virtue. In Pictavium Fortunatus received priest's orders, and towards the end of the century became Bishop of the same city. As Bishop he was respected and revered by the best known men in Gaul, with most of whom he was in personal touch. He seems to have died early in the seventh century.

His poems are many of them models of sincerity and deep feeling. In his religious hymns especially, the beauty of his language lends new meanings to Christian conceptions. The

[1] MAGANI, *S. Ennodio* (3 vols., Pavia, 1886. *Opp.*, ed. HARTEL, *Corp. script. eccl. Vindob.*, VI.), ed. VOGEL (*Mon. Germ. hist., Auctt. antiq.*, VII.).

poems of Fortunatus are written in an agreeable metre. They display his kindly, warm-hearted nature. His readily stimulated muse and his pliancy made him equally at home everywhere, amongst highest and lowest and in circles both spiritual and profane. An instance of his more solemn style is found in his touching elegy on the desolation of Thuringia. This and others of the works of this much travelled poet are also of considerable value on account of the historical notices they contain of places, manners, monuments, and works of art.[1]

His best known pieces are his hymns on the Passion : *Vexilla regis prodeunt* and *Pange lingua gloriosi proelium certaminis.* The former is cast in an Ambrosian form. The latter is a sort of war-song, for, as it celebrates the bloody victory of the Crucified, it was written by the poet in the same measure as the Roman military songs, *i.e.* in the trochaic *tetrameter catalecticus*, arranged in triple lines. Fortunatus in this hymn sings the triumph of the "trophy of the Cross" (*Crucis trophaeo dic triumphum nobilem*). It was written to commemorate the sending by Justin II. of a relic of the True Cross, beautifully mounted, to the convent of Pictavium in answer to a request from Radegunda, just as he had sent one to St. Peter's in Rome. These Passion hymns, having been designed to be sung at the reception of the relic of the Cross, glorify in an especial manner the wood of the Cross, the Tree of Redemption, from which the relic came. In another hymn to the Cross the poet describes with great feeling the vine which entwines the stem and branches of the Cross, and extols its fruit, whence flows "sweet blood-red wine," a poetic description which recalls the figures of the Cross with trailing vines frequently found in mosaics and elsewhere (Ill. 210).[2]

Fortunatus is, none the less, under the influence of the debased

[1] *De excidio Thoringiae.* He treats the subject "*ex persona Radegundis.*" On Fortunatus, see EBERT, *Lit. des Abendlandes*, I, 518. TEUFFEL-SCHWABE, 1278 ff.; LEROUX, *Le poète Fortunat*, 1887; W. MEYER, *Der Gelegenheitsdichter V. Fortunatus* (*Abh. Göttingen, N.F.*, 4, 1900 f.). To Fortunatus we might well apply what Ebert says (p. 362): "Classic culture was forced to take shelter under the wings of the Church, which afforded it an asylum, particularly in conventual houses."

[2] On the sending of the relic of the true Cross to Poitiers, see GREG. TUR., *Hist. Franc.*, 9, c. 40. *Vita S. Radegundis* (*Acta SS.*, 13 Aug., III., p. 67), l. 2, c. 18 ff. On the hymns to the Cross, see EBERT, p. 533 ff. On crosses with vines, see, *e.g.* the sixth century sarcophagus of Fusignano near Faenza, GARRUCCI, Pl. 393; or the Rimini altar (DE ROSSI, *Bull. arch. crist.*, 1864, p. 15) or the mediæval apsidal mosaic of San Clemente, in Rome. Ill. 210 is from HOLTZINGER, *Altchr. Architektur.*, p. 181. The words "VINEA FACTA EST DILECTA IN CORNVM IN LOCO VBERI" (an old Latin version of Isaias v. 1: "My beloved had a vineyard on a hill in a fruitful place") explain the presence of the vine.

taste of his time; his works are not free from exaggeration and affectation, especially those which he produced previous to his ordination, *i.e.* whilst yet a wanderer.

It was during his pilgrimage to Tours that he composed in Austrasia, at the Court of King Sigibert, the nuptial hymn, or

Ill. 210.—Christ's Vine.

Tessellated pavement from the apse of a church in Ancona.

Epithalamium, for the latter's marriage with Brunhilda (566). At that time he still shared the weakness for borrowing from Olympus the figures for the adornment of such nuptial odes. In his poetry, however, Venus, Cupid, and the rest play a humbler and more decent part than in certain earlier works of the decadence. We can also feel that in such passages the poet is not quite at his ease. As a whole, the Germanic world in

which he lived never showed the interest in mythology displayed by members of the Latin family.[1]

Not only the Epithalamia, but also other panegyrics of Fortunatus verge on the extravagant. Wherever he went he was ready with a song in praise of friends or of those who showed him hospitality. He lauds King Chilperic in a flattering poem actually recited before the Bishops at a Synod generally believed to have been that of Braunacum (Braine) in 580. He here assures Chilperic with quiet confidence that the world is full of his name; Libya, the Red Sea, and even the distant Indus are acquainted with his fame; the King's art of writing verses is as great as his valour in battle. And yet in Chilperic's Latin distichs there were verses in plenty which were either too long or too short. On a later occasion, with equal fulsomeness, Fortunatus told Charibert, another Merovingian king, that to him was due a place near Trajan and the Fabians, yea, near Solomon himself. Charibert, too, the poet honours for his dexterity in handling the Latin language.[2]

In those days Frankish kings and nobles were flattered to be praised as expert Latinists. The numerous poems written by our poet in their honour also show that they were delighted to hear their exploits sung in Latin verse.

Vilithusa, a noble lady who was certainly not a Roman, is called one by Fortunatus in a poem addressed to her, because, forsooth, she had made herself perfectly at home in Latin culture. Duke Lupus, a gentleman of mixed descent — Roman and German—employed at the Austrasian Court of King Sigibert, is politely told that, in his worthy person, noble Rome herself has settled down at the German Court.[3]

459. Against this one-sided glorification of old Romanism we may set the fine lines upon the Frankish nation in the prologue of the Salic Law written about this same time. This Latin preface, cast in metric form, is the oldest specimen of Frankish native poetry. It extols the nation as handsome, clever,

[1] On the mythological element, see EBERT, p. 526.

[2] For the panegyric of Venantius Fortunatus on Chilperic, see *Carmina*, 9, n. 1. At the beginning he addresses the "*ordo sacerdotum*," *i.e.* the Bishops in Council. For the poet's praise of Charibert, *Carm.*, 6, n. 2 and 4, ed. LEO (*Mon. Germ. hist., Auctt. antiq.*, IV.).

[3] On Vilithusa, *Carm.*, 4, n. 26. On Lupus, 7, n. 7, v. 7.

brave and true, as having risen even higher since it embraced the Catholic Faith, and as having an advantage over the other Arian Germanic nations in that it has never been tarnished by heresy. "The Franks' one-time dependence on the Romans now appears in the light of a bondage of which they freed themselves, thanks to their energy, and they now pride themselves on their rich gifts to the churches of those holy martyrs against whom the Romans formerly raged with fire and sword." [1]

Now that such national feeling prevailed, Pagan pomp and its mythological accompaniment were no longer secure in the Latin schools of the country. In course of time oratory came more and more to adopt the Christian language; the celebrities of Olympus had lost their meaning, and were understood only by the few. In the schools of the grammarians, heathen subjects had to take a back place, though they were not swept away, and at a later period, especially in that of the Carolings, were again to see a better day.

## Compilations and Handbooks

460. One literary distinction of that age was the useful educational books it bequeathed to posterity.

It produced a number of works, which, though only of middling character so far as style and contents were concerned, enjoyed an extraordinary popularity during subsequent ages, especially in the schools, and thus handed down to latter times the treasures of knowledge and civilisation salved from the shipwreck of classical antiquity.

Of such a stamp was, for instance, the poem of Arator, the Roman subdeacon, on the Acts of the Apostles. So largely was it studied in the Middle Ages, that, though it scarcely deserved the honour, it became a kind of Christian Virgil. It was, indeed, not devoid of educational value, and was pervaded by a breath of classicism, but its allegorism fostered the inclination of mediæval poets and men of letters for fanciful allusions.[2]

In a different field, the works of Cassiodorus were likewise

[1] WATTENBACH, *Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen*[6], 1, 90. Cp. WAITZ, *Verfassungsgesch.*[3], 2, 1, 122 ff.; TEUFFEL-SCHWABE, p. 1230.

[2] On Arator's "Acts of the Apostles," see vol. ii. p. 339 ff.

used as handbooks in the West, forming, as they did, real arsenals of scholarship. Next came the pleasant and attractive Dialogues of Gregory the Great, with their abundance of miraculous incident, which gratified the taste for legend. Of a rather earlier date were the profound works of Boethius, the Latin translations of the speculative, mystical books called after Dionysius the Areopagite, the compilations of Dionysius Exiguus, &c.

Cassiodorus justly praises the monk **Dionysius Exiguus** for having made, by his translations, the elements of Greek Christian culture more intelligible to the West. "True, he was Scythian by descent," says Cassiodorus, "but his training was Roman. He was versed in Greek and Latin learning, and so sure was he of both languages, that, without the slightest hesitation, he could read a Greek work in Latin, or a Latin one in Greek." In Rome Dionysius busied himself in the service of the Holy See, compiling, from sources both Greek and Western, facts of law and tradition; he also translated into Latin important works of the Greek Fathers.[1]

Cassiodorus, his friend and admirer, had himself the merit of having made known the Byzantine church-historians to the mediæval schools by means of his famous *Historia tripartita.*

Two members of the Roman clergy also occupied themselves during the sixth century with translations from the Greek. John, a subdeacon, in collaboration with Pelagius (later Pope Pelagius I.), translated the "Sayings of the Early Fathers," an ascetic work intended for edification. Another John, a deacon, compiled an "Exposition of the Heptateuch" from the writings of the various Fathers. A similar work, on the Gospels, belongs either to this latter writer or to Victor, Bishop of Capua (†554). To the last belongs, besides other writings, a translation of the "Harmony of the Gospels" in Greek by Ammonius Saccas, and a "Scholia to Genesis," compiled from Greek Christian writers.[2]

These works, albeit they betray considerable industry, have no claim to originality, but they drew attention to the treasures

[1] CASSIODORUS on Dionysius in *Instit.*, c. 23.

[2] The work of John the Subdeacon was included in the *Vitae Patrum*, ed. ROSWEYD (*P.L.*, LXXIII., 851. On JOAN. DIAC., *Expositum in Heptateuchum*, see PITRA, *Spicil. Solesmense*, 1, 278 ff. The *Expositum in Evangelia*, ibid., Praef., p. LVIII. ff. On Victor, Bishop of Capua, see *P.L.*, LXVIII.; BARDENHEWER, p. 584.

of Greek literature at a time when Rome, being once more under Byzantine authority, could only gain by appropriating the wisdom of the East. The Greek monasteries in Rome and in Southern Italy subsequently also busied themselves with translation work on a large scale, though, unfortunately, they confined themselves too much to the favourite sphere of pious legends.

The so-called Bible *Catenae*, which made their appearance in the West during the Middle Ages, form a continuation of the writings just mentioned. People liked to string together thus the pronouncements of antiquity, passage by passage, like the links of a chain. The plan upon which such books were based embodied the Catholic principle that it is in the light of tradition that Holy Scripture must be interpreted; the method adopted can, however, scarcely be recommended as a literary model. To these works we owe it, nevertheless, that many books of the primitive Church, which would otherwise have been utterly lost, are here represented by excerpts. Down to our own day discoveries continue to be made of fragments of early authors buried among these once neglected works of theological literature.[1]

461. Obviously, among the scant literary work of the period, books on religion were bound to preponderate, one reason being that culture had retired beneath the shelter of the Church and the monasteries, and another that religious and moral subjects, amidst the prevailing misery, were preferred to things profane. Yet, even then, besides the school-books and classics, a few secular tales, to all intents and purposes novels, found a limited circle of readers.

About the middle of the sixth century a secular poet, who was, however, a Christian, Maximian the Tuscian, gave a detailed account of his amorous adventures, not without some unsavoury interludes. This book is seldom heard of. The romantic history of Apollonius, King of Tyre, enjoyed a wider circulation. This is a translation, made in the sixth century, of a Greek work by a Pagan, dating from the third century or even earlier. The Christian has translated it freely into Latin, leaving plentiful traces of the debased speech of his age, for

[1] Cp. *e.g.* PITRA, *Spicil. Solesmense*, I, and the Praefatio, p. L. ff.

colloquial Latin enters largely into the book. The description, moreover, lacks vitality, and reminds one of the narratives produced by the Greek sophists. Venantius Fortunatus once alludes to this "shipwrecked Apollonius." The tale, in new translations, found its way into the literature of the Romance languages.[1]

We can easily gather from casual remarks by contemporaries which books exercised the greatest fascination and were most widely read in Rome, especially in clerical circles.

Preference was given to the lives of the saints and to historical books, and, during the fifth and part of the sixth century, to the better and more cultivated of the pious historians. The first place belonged to Sulpicius Severus, the elegant Aquitanian, surnamed the "Christian Sallust," with his Life of St. Martin of Tours, his Dialogues, and his two volumes of Chronicles. When his Life of St. Martin reached Rome, he tells us that "it was fought for, while booksellers declared that nothing had ever been so quickly sold, and at so high a price." Among the popular books were the Lives of the Fathers, by Rufinus of Aquileia, who brought before his readers the strange world of the Nitrian desert and its penitent ascetics—a fine subject, indeed, though not handled with the skill of Sulpicius Severus. There was also that favourite of the best classes, Paulinus of Nola, the gentle, tender poet who so vividly described church life from every point of view. In certain select circles attachment was shown to the grave letters and writings of St. Jerome, in which feeling and power combine with a vast scholarship, and in which passages are not unfrequently met which display genuine oratorical art.[2]

Prudentius, the lively, inspiriting Spanish poet, was immensely popular, particularly his scenes from the history of the martyrs, which are notable for their vivid colouring and deep feeling. His *Psychomachia*, or "Soul's Combat," an allegory of the virtues and the vices, was eagerly perused by ascetics of either sex. St. Avitus of Vienne, for instance, in a letter to

[1] On Maximian, see TEUFFEL-SCHWABE, 1274 ff. On King Apollonius, ibid., 1272. FORTUNATUS, *Carm.*, 6, n. 8.

[2] Sulpicius Severus speaks of the sale of his books in *Dial.* 1, c. 23. His Life of St. Martin is not free from exaggeration, nor has he shown due caution in his selection of the Saint's reputed miracles. RUFINUS, *Vitae Patrum*, sometimes spoken of as *Historia eremitica* or *monachorum*. On Paulinus of Nola, see present work, vol. i. p. 53.

his sister, Fuscina, quotes from this work the description of the battle between chastity and sensuality. Fuscina was well able to judge the value of this book, for, besides the whole of the Bible, she had read all the Latin religious poets.[1]

The *Psychomachia*, to which her brother referred her, is a peculiar and quite original work. It is the first example of a purely allegorical poem in the literature of the West, and was in great measure responsible for the extent to which this form of art was cultivated in the Middle Ages. In some sense it depicts the spiritual combat which actually took place on the threshold of the Middle Ages between Paganism and Christianity, between barbarian cruelty and passion and Christian morality. Many items contained in it applied equally well to the centuries after Prudentius, and corresponded to circumstances still obtaining in the early Middle Ages. For instance, he brings "Idolatry" on the scene with her forehead bound with a fillet, after the fashion of the heathen priests; he also describes how "Idolatry" assails "Faith," a humble figure in peasant's dress, who comes forward to meet her adversary with her arms and shoulders bared, ready for the fray. "Sensuality," in this poem, is shown as the greatest of the Furies, bearing a torch of burning brimstone, with which she attacks "Chastity," trying to strike her bashful eyes with the flame, only to be finally overcome and to perish by the sword. Next comes "Pride" with lofty headgear. "Luxury" is a tipsy dancer on a chariot drawn by four horses. "Avarice," with her followers, as with a pack of wolves, eagerly rummages among the slain lying on the forsaken battle-field. She seizes men of all classes, even priests of the Lord; but "Reason" protects the tempted, and the wounds they receive are not dangerous. Finally, "Good Works" (*Operatio*) fells "Avarice" to the ground.[2]

The power of such imaginative descriptions depended entirely on the manner of treatment. Those who were afterward to venture on the seas of allegory did not all steer clear of rocks with as much success and skill as Prudentius.

[1] AVITUS, *De consolatoria laude castitatis ad Fuscinam sororem*, v. 370 ff. PRUDENTIUS, *Psychomachia*, *P.L.*, LX., 11 ff.

[2] In the *Psychomachia*, v. 585, the poet depicts the victory of "*operatio*" over "*avaritia*" as follows: "*Mentis avaritia stupefactis sensibus haesit,* | *Certa mori; nam quae fraudis via restet, ut ipsa* | *Calcatrix mundi, mundanis victa fatiscat* | *Illecebris, spretoque iterum sese implicet auro?* | *Invadit trepidam virtus fortissima duris* | *Ulnarum nodis, obliso et gutture frangit* | *Exsanguem siccamque gulam . . .*"

## Decay of Historical Work, and Want of Historical Knowledge—The Apocrypha in Art

462. Fancy, used judiciously as it was by Prudentius in the work just mentioned, was of service in the composition and adornment of the "moralities" which enjoyed such favour in the Middle Ages. In historical works, however, it had no right to the first place, nor indeed to any footing whatever, in so far as it distorted the truth of what was related. Nevertheless, at the time with which we are dealing, and still more later on, imagination was encroaching in an alarming manner on the preserves of history. In reputedly historical works, the fancy of this period of decay freely created incidents and events, the will being father to the deed. Spurious manuscripts were circulated in far greater number than ever before. The sense of historical veracity was gradually lost, writers delighting in the extraordinary and miraculous.

Doubtless this phenomenon was bound up with the general decline of education, for want of culture delivered writers from the older restraints, and led readers to accept childishly everything that was put before them. Hence comes, amongst our available sources of information, that confusion of the boundary-line between imagination and reality in regard to all incidents of the past, which compels the historian to be cautious at every step, unless he is ready to take apocryphal information for genuine, and fall victim to alluring pious fancies.

In an historical work like the present, it must seem justifiable to consider in some detail this reckless output of unveracious history which accompanied Rome's intellectual decline. The reader can only gain by bestowing his attention on the instances of mental aberration which we shall cite, and by visiting the laboratories whence these forgeries proceeded. Respect for the unadulterated historical sources of the past will in no wise be diminished when we recognise the impurity which occasionally sullied them. For one thing, we may learn that many of the falsehoods are of a much less harmful character, and much more innocent in their origin, than the detractors of the Middle Ages would have us believe.[1]

[1] Cp. DELEHAYE, *Les légendes hagiographiques* (*Rev. des quest. hist.*, 74, 1903), p. 56 ff.

So far as Rome is concerned, it is true that many apocryphal works were produced there, that they frequently hailed from clerical circles, were sanctioned and made use of, in entire good faith, by the Curia, and even found their way into the official Papal Registers. The authors may however be, if not exculpated, at least to some extent excused through the general prevalence of the abuse. As for the Popes who availed themselves of such documents, the only charge to which they are usually open, is that they were not in advance of their day, and that, in the midst of a period entirely lacking in criticism, they had not at their headquarters any tribunal which might have sifted the historical inaccuracies then in circulation

463. A favourite ground for fanciful legend-mongers was to be found in the Bible narrative.

Old and New Testament Apocrypha had been in circulation even earlier, but in the period under consideration new productions of the same character were industriously composed. The accounts handed down by Holy Writ were considered too meagre, and, in the New Testament particularly, exception was taken to the paucity of details concerning the early life of our Lord. Hence whatever was seen to be lacking was boldly supplemented by forgeries, preferably ascribed to some person or other whose name appears in the Bible. It is true that the character of these productions differed entirely from the simple, lofty tone of the sacred books. The senseless heaping together of fantastic statements, not unfrequently noticeable in them, quite apart from their inconsistencies and contradictions, by their contrast, help to place the lasting value of the Holy Scriptures in still clearer light.

No doubt in some cases the Apocrypha of the New Testament contain traditions concerning the life of Christ or of the Apostles, current at the time of writing. A little of the gold of genuine tradition may possibly lie beneath the mass of dross. It may also be that this very circumstance, that some truth was known to lurk in these spurious writings, contributed to their acceptance and dissemination. Afterwards, however, when their real origin had been lost to sight in the mists of time, just because of the varied and fantastic character of their contents, they continued to exercise their old attraction. The Fathers of the Church often raised a protest against this exuberant literature, and it was because of it

that the Church drew up the Canon of the authentic books of the Bible. Although these productions were thereby forbidden to be read in the churches or to be used in the liturgy, they held their ground far and wide as books for private reading.

The "Gelasian decree" instances no less than nine Gospels, forged, and set into circulation under false names: those of Matthias, Peter, James the Less, Barnabas, Thomas, Bartholomew, and Andrew, and two others ascribed to Lucian and Hesychius. As for Apostolic "Acts," presuming to imitate the Acts of the Apostles, four are mentioned in the same decree, those of Thomas, Peter, Philip, and of Paul and Thecla. An "Itinerarium bearing the name of Peter, and called after St. Clement," alluded to in the same passage, is the well-known *Periodoi Petrou*, usually called the "Clementine Recognitions."[1]

Nevertheless, in the Rome of the fifth century, the general attitude towards such Apocrypha, so long as their character was orthodox, was friendly to such a degree that their unsupported narratives were adopted without ado by Christian artists as fit subjects to be immortalised on monuments.

Until the middle of the fourth century, Christian art was chary of reproducing scenes from the Biblical Apocrypha, and no trace of their influence is found. The subjects chosen bear witness to the artists' esteem for the authentic Scriptures, but contain no hint of the existence of spurious ones. Only when all danger had passed of weakening the authority of the canonical Gospels, by adding details from the uncanonical books, did the Church allow artists to make use of such narratives as were considered to possess some worth.

The earliest instance of a whole scene from the Apocrypha occurs on the Triumphal Arch in the Esquiline Basilica of Sta. Maria Maggiore, that grand work dating from the years following the Council of Ephesus, which we have already described (vol. ii. p. 33 ff.).

Among the other large mosaics on the Arch, which depicted scenes from the childhood of Jesus and are taken from the canonical Gospels, there is one which gave rise to great difficulty in its interpretation. It was often supposed to represent the child Jesus among the doctors in the Temple of Jerusalem. It has, however, been proved to be merely a scene recorded in

[1] For the Gelasian decree, see THIEL, *Epist. rom. pont.*, p. 454 ff.

the apocryphal Gospel of St. Matthew. We see the city on the Nile, and Prince Aphrodisius, with his retinue and philosopher, coming to meet the Divine Child and his parents during their flight into Egypt, and exclaiming: "Were this not a god above our gods, their statues would not have fallen down at his approach." The mosaic thus demonstrates the godhead of the Child, the triumph of Christianity, and the dignity of Mary. It is certainly a curious fact that, in the time of Xystus III., and upon so memorable a work of art, apocryphal Gospels should have been allowed to mingle their voices with the canonical to proclaim the Divinity of Christ and the majesty of Mary.[1]

The same series of mosaics contains also two allusions to the apocryphal New Testament. For instance, the angel Gabriel, at the Annunciation, finds Mary at work with the spindle. A basket full of purple yarn stands before her, of which she holds up a handful while listening to the words of the angel. The scene, including the item of the purple yarn, comes from the so-called *Proto-evangelium Iacobi.* It is found again later, in several artistic efforts, particularly on a sarcophagus in Ravenna (Ill. 211),[2] and the details occasionally vary, but it seems to have been first depicted in the Esquiline church of Our Lady.[3]

Upon the same mosaic St. Joseph is, moreover, twice portrayed as an elderly man and with a full beard, whereas in all early pictures Christ's foster-father appears as a young and beardless youth. It was the Apocrypha which related that Joseph at his marriage with Mary was a widower of advanced age; for instance, the "Proto-evangelium" of St. James the Less, and the "Gospel of the Birth of Mary." The representations having once been adopted from these sources in the mosaic of Xystus III., soon became more and more general.[4]

[1] This is the explanation given by DE ROSSI, *Musaici*, sec. v., and previously in DE WAAL, *Die apokryphen Evangelien in der altchristl. Kunst*, in the *Röm. Quartalschr.*, 1 (1887), 189, giving a reference to pseudo-Matthew, c. 24. Both writers give coloured reproductions. Cp. J. P. RICHTER, *Di un raro soggetto rappresentato nei mosaici della basilica Liberiana*, in *Nuovo Bull. di arch. crist.*, 1899, p. 137 ff., with a photo. RICHTER AND TAYLOR, *The Golden Age*, &c., 1904. GARRUCCI, *Arte crist.*, Pl. 214.

[2] A. LIELL, *Die Darstellungen der allersel. Jungfrau*, p. 214. KRAUS, *Gesch. der christl. Kunst*, p. 189.

[3] Cp. *Realencykl. der christl. Alterth.*, 2, 936. *Proto-evangelium Iacobi*, c. 10 ff.

[4] DE ROSSI, *Bull. arch. crist.*, 1865, p. 31. The church of S. Maria Antiqua on the Forum, excavated in 1900 (cp. present work, vol. i. p. 244 ff.), had in its right aisle some scenes from Mary's childhood, drawn from apocryphal sources. They, however, dated from the latter half of the eighth century. Cp. WILPERT, *Byzant. Zeitschr.*, 14 (1905), p. 581 ff.

Ill. 211.—Mary with the Distaff.

(Scene of the Annunciation according to the Apocrypha, on a sarcophagus of Ravenna.)

464. How subjects from the Apocrypha took early possession of Christian art is clearly seen on St. Maximian's episcopal chair at Ravenna, which, with its ivory panels, is one of the most valuable works of art of Christian antiquity.[1]

Here we not only find Mary, at the Annunciation, with the basket of yarn beside her, and the distaff in her left hand, as well as an aged and bearded St. Joseph, but there are also two singular representations of the experiments by which Mary's innocence in Christ's conception and her virginity after His birth were said by the Apocrypha to have been demonstrated. In one case she is seen in the presence of St. Joseph and an angel, drinking the water of ordeal, which, according to pseudo St. Matthew and other Apocrypha, caused a spot to appear on the face of the guilty. In the other, Salome, in testimony to the postpuerperal virginity of Mary, holds up the hand that had withered in punishment of her presumption.[2]

The scene with Salome and the midwife seems to have exercised great attraction on Christian writers and artists. In spite of St. Jerome's justifiable protests, it was turned to account by the ecclesiastical writer Zeno, and even by Prudentius. In the Roman Catacombs of St. Valentine we can still make out the word "Salome," written vertically on a seventh or eighth century picture, where this subject appears. The mosaics of John VII., in St. Peter's, a work of the beginning of the eighth century, also made great use of the tale.[3]

Ill. 212.—Christ's Nativity. (Mantua.)

The well-known representation of the Nativity, with the ox and the ass, as it appears upon the above-mentioned bishop's chair at Ravenna, and upon many other works of art belonging to the years after 343 (Ill. 212 and 213), is by no means necessarily borrowed from the Apocrypha, for the tradition concerning the animals appears elsewhere too. Even St. Jerome, who is so

[1] Garrucci, *Arte crist.*, 6, Pl. 415 ff. Cp. Schultze, *Archäologie der altchristl. Kunst* (1895), pp. 129, 281.

[2] On the water of ordeal, see Garrucci, Pl. 417, 2. On Salome, 417, 4.

[3] Hieronymus, *Contra Helvidium*, c. 8; *P.L.*, XXIII., 192: "*Nulla ibi obstetrix*," &c. De Waal, ibid., 183, note 2. Marucchi, *Il cimitero e la basilica di S. Valentino*, p. 63 ff. Garrucci, 2, Pl. 84. On the mosaic of John VII., see Garrucci, 4, Pl. 280, 2; 281, 1. For the tale, see *Proto-evangelium of James* (in Hone, *Apocryphal N.T.*), xiv., 15 ff.

severe on the Apocrypha, was disposed to allow this idea of the crib to pass.[1]

On the other hand, another detail upon Maximian's chair certainly comes from the apocryphal Gospels. During the journey to Bethlehem, when the time for Mary's delivery had arrived, an angel stops the sumpter-mule by the bridle, and directs the mother into a cave by the wayside. This is a scene from the so-called "Gospel of the Birth of Mary," which gives the legend in full.[2]

To those accustomed to seek reliable historical information in the sources and monuments, it is surprising to find, thus mingled together in such early times, fiction and genuine tradition. The critical habits of our times would impose a more cautious pro-

Ill. 213.—Christ's Nativity. (Lateran.)

cedure, but in those ages people gloried in holding, in its entirety, the complete story of Christ. There was as yet no need to defend the genuine witnesses of evangelical truth, and to safeguard their authority by carefully removing them from the suspicious society of the Apocrypha. Hence the permission occasionally given to the latter, so long as their character was above suspicion of heresy, to wind their creepers around the strong trunk of truth, for the health of which no fear was entertained.

465. The example set by the biblical Apocrypha was meanwhile being followed in many other spheres. In the field of Church History, especially in narratives concerning the saints

[1] De Rossi, *Bull. arch. crist.*, 1877, p. 141. See figure of the Cathedra in Garrucci, 6, Pl. 417, 4. A. West, *Il bue e l'asino nella legenda della Natività* (*Il Rinnovamento*, 1907, p. 482 ff.). Cabrol, *Dict. d'Arch.*, art. *Âne*, 1, 2048. Illustrations 212, 213, from Liell, *Die Darstellungen Mariä*, pp. 222, 271; Kraus, *Gesch. d. chr. Kunst*, p. 171.

[2] Garrucci, 6, Pl. 417, 3.

and martyrs, and accounts dealing with the foundation of the different churches—many writers being led by local patriotism to magnify the importance of their own community—all sorts of fictitious accounts were produced, and documents, purporting to be original charters, were not seldom forged outright.

The propagation of such untruths and forgeries was much facilitated by the fact that few works of strictly historical contents existed in the Church—few books, that is, of wide scope and written in a scholarly spirit, which might have served to expose and confute these fabrications. In the West there existed no general history of the Church, let alone any particular history of the Popes or of the Councils or of Canon Law. In the East the Church was indeed somewhat better off. The Greeks were justly proud of the classical Church History of Eusebius, written in the fourth century, and continued in the fifth by Socrates, Sozomen, and, above all, by that ripe scholar, Theodoret. They also had the advantage of possessing many historical works devoted to particular matters.

Against all this the Latins could only put a poor, faulty version of the Eusebian Church History, by the careless pen of Rufinus, in which, moreover, very little is said of Western affairs, or of the Popes. Jerome, indeed, translated and brought up to date the chronological tables from the chronicle of Eusebius, but this furnished but a meagre source of history. The same Father also composed a little work of his own, *De viris illustribus seu de scriptoribus ecclesiasticis*, a book which contains some valuable information, but which is also very inadequate, and teems with extraordinary oversights and blunders.[1]

Sulpicius Severus, likewise, provided the West with a history or sacred chronicle written in 403. It was in excellent Latin, but dealt very scantily with the Christian period. Cassiodorus, towards the middle of the sixth century, in his *Historia Tripartita* did no more than fuse together translations and excerpts from Socrates, Sozomen, and Theodoret.

History was thus something alien, and the prevailing lack of instruments for study made it easy for people to be misled into accepting, in all good faith, false and spurious accounts as true.

[1] SYCHOWSKI (*Hieronymus als Literarhistoriker*, 1894) points out Jerome's limitations (*Kirchengesch. Studien*, ed. KNÖPFLER, SCHRÖRS AND SDRALEK, vol. ii. fasc. 2); cp. BERNOULLI (*Der Schriftstellerkatalog des Hieronymus*, 1895).

The want of historical records of the Church was responsible for mistakes even in documents emanating from the Popes.

As an instance in point, we may cite what happened under Pope Zosimus. Patroclus, Bishop of Arles, who was unduly anxious to enhance the dignity of his see, assured Pope Zosimus that the Church of Arles owed its foundation to an immediate disciple of St. Peter, *viz.* to St. Trophimus, from whom Arles first, and then the rest of Gaul, had received the Faith. Upon this Zosimus, who was only too ready to place reliance on the assurances of others, in all innocence repeated these statements in a letter to Gaul. Later Gregory the Great, taking his clue from this earlier letter addressed to Gaul, in an important epistle to the Bishop of Arles, alludes to the conversion of the whole of Gaul by the Apostle's disciple. In spite of this the statement is no way borne out by history. Even from the Frankish historian, Gregory of Tours, who was almost a contemporary of Gregory the Great, we may gather with certainty that there was no accredited or even probable tradition in Gaul in favour of such a supposition. He contents himself with mentioning concerning Arles, that under the Emperor Decius, *i.e.* in the third century, St. Trophimus came as Bishop to Arles. If, in spite of this, the sending of Trophimus by St. Peter was in the Middle Ages reckoned an established fact, it is obvious that the statements of Popes Zosimus and Gregory I. cannot avail to confirm it. Hence history, in view of the difficulties, of which we have mentioned only one, is justified in demanding better proofs before conceding, not the bare possibility of that early conversion of Gaul by St. Peter's disciple, but that such a thing really occurred.[1]

The Popes had evidently no *series episcoporum* of all the Churches of Christendom, such as those now being compiled at the cost of so much toil. Had Rome been prompter in compiling Annals of Church History, many mistakes would have been avoided. The first centuries were, however, a time for action rather than for writing. The great tasks of the Church were being performed without the historical retrospection or research which belong to a more modern but less productive age. Even

[1] GREG. TUR., *Hist. Franc.*, 1, c. 28. ZOSIMUS, *Ep. ad Hilarium*, MANSI, 4, 364; JAFFÉ-KALTENBR., n. 332. GREG. M., *Registrum*, 5, n. 58 (5, n. 53), *ad Virgilium*. Cp. DUCHESNE, *Fastes épiscopaux de l'ancienne Gaule*, 1, 104, 120. Cp. A. HOUTIN, *La controverse de l'apostolicité des Églises de France au XIX^e siècle*[3], 1903.

at the Apostolic period, when the Church was being planted throughout vast tracts of country, no imperative need made itself felt to commit to writing the story of the journeys and vicissitudes of the divinely appointed preachers. The Church was not built upon history and learning, but upon the abiding deeds of the Holy Ghost.

466. The earliest canons and laws of the Church shared the fate of its history. At first no attempt was made to collect them carefully, an omission which may easily be explained and excused, but which made it possible for spurious collections to spring up, for instance, the so-called Apostolic Constitutions and Apostolic Canons, which usurped great authority. Forgeries were imprudently allowed to establish themselves wherever there was an opening.

In Rome, custom and practice formed good guides for the administration of Canon Law, even apart from the archives deposited in the Lateran. It is also possible that collections existed of which we now are ignorant. At any rate the East was in advance of the West as much with regard to codification of the laws as with regard to written history. From the East, in Latin translations, came the books of Canon Law commonly used in Italy. Beside the Nicene decrees they contained those of the Councils of Ancyra, Neo-Cæsarea, and Gangra, to which at a later date were added those of Antioch, Laodicea, Constantinople, and Chalcedon. There was also a collection of the African Councils made in 419.[1]

The first to combine all these synodal documents was Dionysius Exiguus, a monk from the Roman province of Scythia, living in Rome, who wrote *ca.* 500. At the head of his collection he placed a translation of the spurious so-called "Apostolic Canons," numbering fifty, which till then had been unknown in the West. Subsequently he added a collection of epistolary decretals by Popes Siricius, Innocent, Zosimus, Boniface, Celestine, Leo, Gelasius, and Anastasius II. Pope Hormisdas accepted the dedication of a new edition of the whole work, and Pope John II., in his official documents, already uses it as the source of his quotations from Councils and Papal decrees. To Dionysius

[1] MAASSEN, *Gesch. der Quellen*, p. 66 ff. DUCHESNE, *Liber pont.*, I, p. CXXX.

Exiguus the Roman Church was accordingly beholden for an important and influential *Liber canonum*.[1]

The "Apostolic Canons" mentioned above are a collection of decrees, late but genuine, issued by Councils held in the fourth century. The collection dates from the beginning of the fifth century, and probably originated in Syria or Palestine. Although Dionysius in his book of Canon Law shows that he had his doubts as to the Apostolic origin claimed in the title of the work, yet the place of honour which he gave it certainly did much to enhance the authority of these decrees. Gratian, later on, included them in his famous code as genuine regulations of the Apostles, and made great use of the first fifty. Subsequently, in the Middle Ages, they were everywhere deemed true "Apostolic" laws.[2]

In the East the important Council of Constantinople in 692 (*i.e.* the *Trullanum* or *Quinisextum*) decided as follows in favour of these Canons: "The Sacred Synod decides that the 85 (*i.e.* not merely 50) Canons which have been transmitted to us under the name of the holy and venerable Apostles, shall in future remain fixed and unaltered."[3]

The eight books of the Apostolic Constitutions, like the Apostolic Canons with which they are associated, also originated at the beginning of the fifth century, and probably were from the pen of the same Syrian or Palestinian author. The latter is thus proved to have been a man of considerable talent, but it is unjust to argue, as some recently have done, that he was guided by any dogmatic or priestly caste-prejudice. His purpose was rather to re-edit and render more available ecclesiastical documents already then in existence.[4]

His work met with striking success. The Council of Constantinople in 692, whilst admitting the Apostolic Canons, looked with suspicion on the "Constitutions." The very decree which speaks of the former complains that the "Constitutions of the

[1] The "Apostolic Canons," given according to Dionysius, are found in MANSI, I, 49 ff. Dionysius had them from the "Apostolic Constitutions" (see below). Cp. FUNK, *Die Apost. Constitutionen* (1891); *Das achte Buch der Apost. Constitutionen* (1893). BARDENHEWER, *Patrologie* (1894, § 5: *Pseudo-apost. Schriften*, p. 31). On Dionysius Exiguus, see DUCHESNE, l.c. Duchesne, in an address at the Congress of Christian Archæology, held in Rome in April 1900, alludes to vestiges of a still earlier collection of laws.

[2] GRATIAN., pars I., dist. 16, c. 4: "*patet quod non sunt inter apocrypha deputandi.*"

[3] *Conc. Trull.*, can. 2; MANSI, II, 940.

[4] See Funk's works cited in note 1; also BARDENHEWER, *Patrologie*, p. 29

Holy Apostles, collected by Clement, have already long ago been tampered with by heretics who made spurious additions contrary to godliness"; for this reason the Council rejected them. In spite of this, Greek theologians and Canonists were afterwards to make as much use of them as of genuine decrees.[1]

Another much-used spurious production of theologico-philosophical content which Rome and the West owed to the East was the cycle of works circulating under the name of **Dionysius the Areopagite.**

Throughout the Middle Ages their profundity made them one of the favourite and richest mines resorted to in the West by theologians and mystics. Even scholars at the Roman Court, and the Popes, looked up to the Areopagite as an invaluable guide to the understanding of the deeper truths of religion. Even to-day many books on theology or asceticism, by writers whose learning is not equal to their good will, continue to quote passages purporting to have been written by the wise Areopagite of Athens, whom St. Paul is said to have converted.

In reality the works ascribed to the Areopagite were not composed until the last decades of the fifth century. They are by an unknown but orthodox author, hailing probably from Syria. When they were for the first time put forward publicly—*viz.* at the conference held at Constantinople in 531—they were promptly denounced as spurious by Hypatius, Bishop of Ephesus. In spite of this they quickly obtained a footing, and a hundred years later every one in Rome was persuaded of their authenticity. The Lateran Council in 649 quoted them with obvious acknowledgment, and praised their supposed author. In our day, however, criticism has made almost all scholars agree in the impossibility of ascribing them to Dionysius the Areopagite.[2]

## The Roman so-called Symmachian Forgeries

467. A number of narratives and documents which have since become famous, but which are all of them fictitious, are met with in Rome under the pontificate of Pope Symmachus. These

[1] *Conc. Trull.*, l.c.

[2] J. STIGLMAYR, *Das Aufkommen der pseudo-dionysianischen Schriften bis* 649, Feldkirch, 1895, *Programm*, p. 84, on the Lateran Council. The Greek writings are known as *De divinis nominibus*, *De coelesti hierarchia*, *De ecclesiastica hierarchia*, *De theologia mystica*, and there are, besides, ten epistles.

documents, long since recognised as spurious, were forged in support of this Pope during the attacks of which he was the object, and in later times, owing to their frequent citation, they secured quite undeservedly a high position in Canon Law. At the same time it would be unjust to assert, as some moderns have done, that they were purposely devised to enhance the authority of the Papal See; on the contrary, their character is private, and no proof is forthcoming that they were ever used officially or publicly on behalf of Symmachus. The date of their composition is, however, of historical interest, in that it shows how dim the recollection of the fourth century had become to allow of so distorted a version of what had happened being penned at the beginning of the sixth.[1]

The style also betrays the decline in language and culture. The Latin, for instance, is abominable; what is said is vague and disconnected, and occasionally it is scarcely possible to seize the writer's meaning. The forgeries thus contrast most unfavourably with the genuine documents of the Roman Curia and other official productions of that date.

We have already described how Pope Symmachus was persecuted by the antipope Lawrence, how he was harassed by the interference of the Civil Court, and falsely charged with simony and immorality. For a long while he was unable to enter into possession of the Papal residence in the Lateran, and was compelled to exercise his authority, and even to administer Baptism, in the Vatican Basilica. Such was the situation when an unknown forger, in the hope of proving of some assistance, produced the documents which have since borne the name of Symmachus, and which contain an echo of the Pope's experiences.

In what follows we shall discuss in detail the contents of the whole group of fictitious legends, first dealing with the "Deeds of Pope Liberius" and "Deeds of Pope Marcellinus," or history of the Synod of Sinuessa.

The fabulous **"Deeds of Pope Liberius"** make their hero linger in exile outside Rome, indeed, yet not at the distance required by history. So near to the City was his place of banishment that he could baptize in the church of St. Agnes, and afterwards, with added solemnity, in the Vatican, where his priest

[1] See vol. ii., p. 224 f., and the works of Döllinger quoted there.

Damasus conveyed the necessary water to a new baptistery. Just as Liberius, in spite of the persecution to which he was subjected, remained the rightful and venerated Pope, so it is easy to see that the author wishes his readers to draw a similar inference with regard to Pope Symmachus.

It is curious to note how two details of the legend afford us some insight into the methods of its inventor.

One is the description of the work undertaken by the priest Damasus for the building of the baptistery. It coincides entirely with the account given by Pope Damasus in a metrical description, of which we possess the original, of what he did as Pope to bring water for baptism into the baptistery he had erected in St. Peter's. Evidently the forger was acquainted with the inscription, and simply recast it in prose form. It is no rare thing for legends to draw upon real monuments and inscriptions, but seldom indeed do they follow the original as faithfully as here.

The other detail is connected with the baptism of Constantine the Great. Regarding this the writer gives his entire credence to the already existing fable of the Emperor's baptism at Rome by Pope **Silvester.** The tale is, however, at variance with the clear and unquestionable narrative of Eusebius, Bishop of Cæsarea, Constantine's contemporary and friend. According to him the Emperor was baptized neither in Rome nor by Silvester, but by Eusebius of Nicomedia in a villa near Nicomedia, at the very end of his life, *i.e.* after the demise of Silvester. In Jerome's Chronicle the same correct account is found, and even the name of the villa, *viz.* Ancyron, is given. With these facts before him, what did our author do? His ingenuity was sufficient to carry him over the difficulty. He, too, tells us of a baptism conferred by Eusebius the Bishop at Nicomedia, in a villa to which he gives the name of Aquilon, evidently a reminiscence of Ancyron. The person baptized, according to the forger, was, however, Constans or Constantius, Constantine's son, whom, in addition, he mistakenly describes as a nephew of the great Emperor.[1]

[1] The *Gesta Liberii papae* are printed in *P.L.*, viii., 1388 ff., from COUSTANT, *Epp. rom. pont.*, Append., p. 89. In this Appendix the other "Symmachian forgeries" will be found. Cp. DUCHESNE, *Liber pont.*, I, p. cxx. ff. See EUSEBIUS on Constantine's baptism and death in *Vita Constantini*, 4, c. 61–64. The narrative, which effectively disposes of the tale of his early baptism by Silvester, begins with the words: *Ἐπειδὴ δὲ εἰς ἔννοιαν ἥκει τῆς τοῦ βίου τελευτῆς*, &c.

It is worth mentioning here that this legend of the persecution of Pope Liberius was made use of some twenty years later by the compiler of the *Liber pontificatis*, though he again freely remodelled it. He utilises it in his chapter on Liberius, though in such a way as to show that he had not the slightest confidence in it. This writer actually degrades Liberius to the extent of making him a mere tool of the heretic Constantius, and a persecutor of the Catholics of Rome. On the other hand, **Felix,** who, as is well-known, was really the antipope who, during Liberius' exile, was weak enough to allow himself to be promoted to the papacy by the Arian Emperor Constantius, is glorified as a saint and valiant confessor.[1]

Here we have again a mass of historical errors betraying the state of anarchy into which history fell during the decline of Roman civilisation. Evidently such mistakes could arise only from popular confusion. By some process the people had come to identify the antipope Felix with a saintly martyr of the same name venerated in Rome. We find also a trace of this mistaken identification of two different persons both in the date and in the place of burial. The martyr Felix, the most prominent among the Roman martyrs of this name, was buried on the *Via Portuensis*, and his interment was celebrated on July 29th. Now the *Liber pontificalis* will also have it that the other Felix, the antagonist of Liberius, finally retired to the *Via Portuensis*, where he expired on an estate belonging to him, likewise on July 29th. As a matter of fact, according to the testimony of a contemporary, Felix the antipope died on November 22nd.[2]

The second so-called Symmachian forgery, the **Deeds of Pope Marcellinus,** contains things no whit less extraordinary.

It deals with the life of this Pope, who seems to have been suspected of having offered sacrifice to idols, and with the Synod of Sinuessa. Throughout the Middle Ages the account of this singular trial at the Synod was in the main accepted as truthful,

[1] DUCHESNE, *Liber pont.*, I, 207, *Liberius*, n. 51: ". . . *Liberius . . . consensit Constantio heretico . . . et tenuit basilicas . . . et persecutio magna fuit in urbe Roma, ita ut clerus et sacerdotes neque in ecclesia neque in balnea haberent introitum.*"

[2] DUCHESNE, *Liber pont.*, I, p. CXXIII. HERGENRÖTHER, *Hdb.*[3], I, 376, 377. HEFELE, *Conciliengesch.*[2], I, 661, 681. JUNGMANN, *Dissertationes*, 2, 81. DÖLLINGER, *Papstfabeln*[2], p. 126. A different view is expressed by DE FEIS, *Storia di Liberio papa*, who agrees with the earlier authors. On the previous attempt made by Antonio Paoli (1790) to save the memory of Felix II., see DE ROSSI, *Inscr. crist.*, I, 176, 177.

and was instanced by historians, theologians, and lawyers. According to this narrative, to consider the case of Marcellinus, 300 bishops and numerous clergy assembled in Council, first in a cave near Sinuessa, and then in the little town itself. Exclaiming that the Supreme See can be judged by no one, after much trouble, they induced Marcellinus to confess his sacrifice to idols, and then to pronounce his own sentence of deposition.[1]

Here, likewise, the bearing of these proceedings on Symmachus, during whose lifetime the tale was invented, is clear. The author wishes to demonstrate that Symmachus can be judged by no one. But to prove the well-known saying that the Pope as supreme judge is subject to no human tribunal, there was certainly no need of inventing so absurd a tale as that of the three hundred Bishops solemnly assembling in Council in the very thick of the Diocletian persecution, when no Christian was secure. To add to the improbability, after the business had been settled, the writer quite aimlessly makes them remain in Council until Diocletian sends special directions from Persia, when most of them are put to death. The axiom regarding the position of the Pope as supreme judge had long since been acknowledged in the Church, and had already then assumed the form given it by the forger, and which it has ever since retained.[2]

468. Three other "Symmachian forgeries" still remain to be considered.

In the **"Purgation of Xystus III.,"** it is related how this Pope, on being charged with immorality by Bassus, had cleared himself by an oath, upon which no further legal procedure was considered necessary. Real history knows nothing of the kind concerning Xystus, and it is difficult to find in his life anything which could in any way have given rise to such a story. All that can be alleged is the suspicion which may have been excited by his excessive gentleness towards the Pelagians."[3]

The tales told about Polychronius, Bishop of Jerusalem, the leading figure in the book, present an even more serious difficulty, for Polychronius had never existed. According to the story, he had,

[1] *Gesta Marcellini papae sive de synodo Sinuessana*, *P.L.*, vi., 11 ff.; MANSI, I, 1250 ff. Cp. HEFELE, p. 144; DUCHESNE, *Liber pont.*, I, p. cxxxiii; and for the history of Marcellinus, pp. lxxiii, xciv, 163. DÖLLINGER, *Papstfabeln*, p. 57.

[2] Cp. the passage from Pope Gelasius, quoted above, vol. ii. p. 242.

[3] DUCHESNE, *Liber pont.*, I, p. cxxvi, 232.

however, been charged with simony, and his fate was evidently intended by the writer to be read in connection with the case of Symmachus, simony, as well as immorality, having been one of the false charges hurled against this Pope.[1]

Finally we have the two documents dealing with Pope Silvester, later on often quoted as genuine by ecclesiastical authors and canonists. They comprise a collection of twenty rules, usually called the *Constitutum Silvestri*, and the decrees of a Synod said to have been held by Silvester with 275 Bishops. The fiction of Constantine's baptism by Silvester, and his subsequent recovery from leprosy, is also interwoven with these spurious documents. The latter legend, once started, took the fancy of the Romans, and, as it seemed to redound to the honour of the Roman Church, it could scarcely be omitted in speaking of Silvester; it thus came to be used first by the less educated, and then even in cultured and official circles.[2]

The main point the author of the spurious *Constitutum Silvestri* has in view is to adduce decrees which might serve the cause of Symmachus, to press home the need of observing the traditional forms of the Ecclesiastical Courts, to show that the clergy are not to be summoned before civil judges, and that "the supreme Bishop may be judged by no one." Not one of the twenty ordinances of the *Constitutum* which Silvester is supposed to have sanctioned at a Council really had him for its author.

In spite of this the *Constitutum*, in time, found its way into the Papal decretals. It is in fact the first false decretal known in history, and was a forerunner of the later spurious Papal decretals intended to settle disputed points of church discipline, which are numerous enough to form a kind of literature apart.

The fictitious Council of 275 Bishops presided over by Pope Silvester, and held in Constantine's presence principally for the ratification of the Council of Nicæa, is unluckily made to take place at a time (in 325) when Constantine was not staying in Rome, and in a place (Trajan's Thermæ) which had never served for holding Councils, and which could not well have been used for the purpose, seeing that the baths were still resorted to. It also enacted impossible decrees; for instance, its Paschal decree,

[1] DUCHESNE, *Liber pont.*, I, p. cxxxiii. ff.

[2] *Constitutum Silvestri*, *P.L.*, viii., 829 ff. For the Council of the 275 Bishops said to have been assembled around Silvester, see ibid., 822 ff.

which is in flagrant contradiction with that of Nicæa, and another which requires forty-six years' service in the Church before a man may be admitted to the priesthood. This Synod under Pope Silvester was alleged to have ratified solemnly the Nicene Council, though our real historical sources are quite silent about any such solemn confirmation. Athanasius and Hilary were both unacquainted with it, though they both deal at length with the Synods of the period. It is needless to labour the point further. The forger of these curious Synodal acts was merely endeavouring by his inventions to place the case of Pope Symmachus in the light he wished.

469. The attitude of the sixth century towards these so-called "Symmachian forgeries" is made clear in the earliest Western collections of canons, compiled not long after.

The oldest collection, that of Dionysius Exiguus, says never a word concerning them, so that we may infer that in Rome, where he wrote, not the slightest authority was attached to them. They had not found their way even into that edition of the Dionysian Canons sent by Pope Hadrian to Charles the Great and the Franks.[1]

The author of the later pseudo-Isidorean collection likewise refrained from incorporating these apparently so important canonical Acts.

In the sixth century they do, however, appear in a less celebrated Italian collection of canonical decrees, which recent research has discovered in a sixth-century MS. of St. Blasius, and a Vatican copy made in the ninth century. This Italian collection has the dubious merit of having first set the Symmachian forgeries in circulation.[2]

In the sixth century likewise, the author of the *Liber pontificalis* also helped on their cause. Not indeed that he makes use of all the documents, and, even where he does lay them under contribution, he treats them with such freedom that he can really have given them scant credit. He welcomes, however, the disciplinary regulations in the forged documents of Pope Silvester, and ascribes them airily to divers Popes, without examining whether historically they fit the circumstances of these Popes.

[1] DUCHESNE, ibid., p. cxxxiv, after MAASSEN, *Gesch. der Quellen*, vol. i.
[2] DUCHESNE, l.c.

To Silvester himself he leaves very little, nor does he hesitate to alter the decrees when it pleases him, so as to bring them into conformity with the customs prevailing in his own time.

## Legends of the Martyrs—Martyrologies

470. The legendary literature which is mixed up with the few Acts of the Martyrs worthy of the name, took its rise from the pious craving to know about each of the earlier martyrs, particularly about the more venerated among them—more than was vouchsafed by the scant information contained in genuine sources. The same thing happened here as with the biblical Apocrypha. The Acts of the Martyrs, extracted from judicial records, or the notices compiled by Christian contemporaries, had mostly been lost, as during the persecutions these documents, being in the Church's possession, were especially liable to destruction. Moreover, during the time of stress, many martyrs were known by name merely. When, however, the Church had carried the day, with the increase in public veneration for the bold confessors of the Faith, and the constant inquiries by foreign pilgrims into the circumstances of the martyrs' life and death, each was gradually provided with a "Passion."

Many of these "Passions" clearly consist of the meagre traditional material, well padded with pious reflections. In others, we can see that common characteristics, implying nothing out of the ordinary, are brought in to enliven the narrative, or that some prominent occurrence belonging to one martyr has been transferred to another.

The piety and fancy of the Greeks were ever ready with such fictions. In Byzantine Italy and in Rome, it was largely to Greek authors that the miraculous, legendary Passions owed their origin and vogue. It is noteworthy that the lives, even of Roman saints, were not seldom translated into Latin from such legends, originally composed in the East, or at least in an Eastern tongue, and then introduced in all good faith to Rome and the West.

Most of these are noted for their awkward and grandiloquent language. The genuine Acts contrast favourably with them as regards style, being usually brief, simple, unostentatious, and devoid of the speeches which in the faked Passions are placed on the martyrs' lips, and which are not seldom vain, self-conscious

orations, intended to wound and provoke the judge. In fine, the genuine Acts bear the stamp of the calm and moderation of classic times. Their heroes are humble men, and not without anxiety as to their own power of resistance. The judicial procedure is correctly described, and in such detail as to savour of pedantry. On the other hand, the later, spurious Acts are offspring of the bad taste and ignorance of the time which gave them birth. They invent a judicial procedure unknown to history, create non-existent prætors and præsides of provinces, sometimes bring on the scene some impossible Emperor who personally acts as judge and executioner, and, generally, they are brimful of anachronisms.

They have also suffered from the taste for false rhetoric. So prevalent was it that even Ennodius pads his otherwise excellent biographies—for instance, that of St. Epiphanius—with long, imaginary speeches, which he puts into his hero's mouth, though without displaying the same ability as Livy.

Through the "Gelasian Decree," we know for certain that at the beginning of the sixth century the Roman Church made no use of the Martyrs' Acts (*gesta martyrum*) for public readings, for one reason, because the names of their authors were unknown, and for another, because they contained much unbecoming and foolish matter, and even things contrary to the faith. The Gelasian decree says very wisely: "With the Roman Church we revere in all devotion all the martyrs and their struggles, which are better known to God than to man. . . . Who can doubt that their sufferings and confession were a great triumph, and that they suffered even more than is recorded in their Acts?" Nevertheless, it goes on to state, "according to ancient custom and through caution, the latter are not read in the holy Roman Church because the names of those who wrote them are shrouded in complete obscurity, and because the documents would be considered by unbelievers and ignorant persons superfluous or not particularly true to the facts of the case."[1]

Gregory the Great also writes in such wise of the so-called Acts of the Martyrs, that it is clear how little weight they carried in the Roman Church, even in his time: "Besides what is contained in the books of Eusebius upon the history of the martyrs, I

[1] The "Gelasian Decree" in THIEL, *Epist. rom. pont.*, p. 454 ff.

know positively that there is nothing to be found in the archives of this Church or in the libraries of the city of Rome, except a few accounts collected in a single volume."[1]

Such disdain for the new Acts of the Martyrs could not, however, long abide. The joy of the faithful over such edifying narratives was too great, while the consciousness of their unreliability naturally tended to disappear in the course of years. Hence, in progress of time, they even found their way into the office of the Church, albeit in an amended form.[2]

471. We are better off with respect to the lists of the martyrs, with their names and the places where they suffered.

The most important list of this kind, the most valued among the so-called **Martyrologies,** has unjustifiably come down to us under the name of a doctor of the Church, St. Jerome, and in a form which, apart from its numerous later deteriorations, goes back to the sixth or even the fifth century. The compiler of this Martyrology placed two apocryphal letters at the head of the work to serve as introduction; one from Chromatius and Heliodorus to Jerome; the other from Jerome to them. The real author of the letters and the whole work is unknown.

The work had no official standing, nor was it published by the Church or by the Holy See, but was merely a private compilation.

As to its origin, the country of its birth is, without a doubt, Italy, and it must first have seen the light in the earlier half of the fifth century, perhaps under the pontificate of Xystus III. The present edition of the book must, however, be ascribed to the sixth century or the beginning of the seventh, since all the copies known—which, when compared to the original, are all considerably altered and corrupted—all revert to a Martyrology by Bishop Aunacharius of Antissiodorum (Auxerre), who was Bishop from 573 to 603. Duchesne's researches, combined with those of de Rossi, have brought this fact to light.[3]

[1] GREG. M., *Registrum*, 8, n. 28 (8, n. 29).

[2] A. Dufourcq (*Études sur les gesta martyrum romains*, Paris, 1900) and Pio Franchi de' Cavalieri have thrown much light on the Roman martyr-legends. On the work of the latter author, see *Röm. Quartalschr.*, 1904, p. 265 ff.

[3] The *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* was lately re-edited by de Rossi and Duchesne in the second November volume of the Bollandists. Cp. the excellent introduction by

The shape and plan of the Martyrology is described to us in few words by Gregory the Great, who had it before him. It contained the names of almost all the martyrs, distributed according to the days, but with only the name, place, and date of martyrdom, and nothing about the mode of death. In his time, so he tells us, the book, which was already widely known, had the reputation of being a reliable historical work which could be made use of in the liturgy. There is also a passage in Cassiodorus which seems to refer to this work.[1]

The original of this great Martyrology, embracing many portions of Christendom, was compiled from good authorities. For the martyrs of the East, the foundation was an ancient Eastern ecclesiastical calendar, now lost. Its information concerning Africa and a part of Italy was likewise drawn from reliable calendars of these Churches.

Of the Roman martyrs, pseudo-Jerome had access to an ancient, comprehensive, and trustworthy list, which we have, unfortunately, also lost. This can be seen by the uniform manner in which pseudo-Jerome mentions the Roman martyrs. As a rule, after giving the place, usually with the word *Romae*, he adds some further topographical information, whether the spot be in the City itself, or in the neighbourhood. In the latter event he inserts the name of the consular road and the number of miles from the City, thus indicating more clearly the site to which was attached the martyr's memory. Such statements regarding the Roman martyrs have frequently had their accuracy established by excavation or by comparison with the information in other trustworthy sources.

The original Roman list of martyrs, that excellent authority, must have been compiled as early as about the year 312, when

Duchesne on the origin of this Martyrology, and his article in the *Mélanges d'archéol. et d'hist.*, 5 (1885), 120–160, as well as de Rossi, ibid., p. 115–119, and *Roma sott.*, 2, especially p. x. ff. What I have said in my *Anal. rom.*, 1, 231 ff., *Le origini del martirologio romano*, is based upon their work. Against the objections of Krusch, see DUCHESNE, *Anal. bollandiana*, 17 (1898), 421 ff., and my *Anal. rom.*, 1, 668, 669. Cp. H. ACHELIS, *Die Martyrologien* (*Abh. Göttingen*, vol. iii., 3, 1900).

[1] GREG. M., *Registr.*, 8, 28 (8, n. 29): "*Nos autem pene omnium martyrum, distinctis per singulos dies passionibus, collecta in uno codice nomina habemus, atque quotidianis diebus in eorum veneratione missarum solemnia agimus. Non tamen in eodem volumine, quis qualiter sit passus, indicatur, sed tantummodo nomen, locus et dies passionis ponitur; unde fit, ut multi ex diversis terris atque provinciis per dies, ut praedixi, singulos cognoscantur martyrio coronati. Sed haec habere vos beatissimos credimus.*" This passage is from the epistle to Eulogius, Patriarch of Alexandria, quoted on p. 221 f. CASSIODORUS, *De instit. div. litt.*, c. 32; *P.L.*, LXX., 1147. See *Anal. rom.*, 1, 256.

the persecutions reached their end, for a calendar of the feasts, dating from 354, or possibly from 336, was based on this list, from which it has borrowed a table for calculating the date of Easter, which goes back to 312.[1]

This list of martyrs may well be the outcome of the calendars (*fasti*) kept in the Roman Church during the first three centuries. It is unquestionable that such *fasti*, with lists of the feasts and saints, were kept by the early Roman Church. Tertullian clearly alludes to such tables of the Churches. They had been so usual in secular circles, in corporations, tribunals, at Court, and among the pagan priests, that the Christian clergy found the necessary forms ready to hand, nor was any change needed to adapt them to Christian purposes. Indeed, the brief, solemn formulæ of the earliest martyrological data cannot fail to remind one of the forms used in the calendars of Pagan times.[2]

Pseudo-Jerome, in his Martyrology, included only the names of the martyrs, with the place and time corresponding, especially the day, the latter being important for the services. Italian saints of the fourth and fifth centuries, who were not martyrs, also find a place in the list. As certain Bishops who died in the second half of the fifth century, and who forthwith received public worship, have not been included, we have good reason for believing the work to have been composed in the first half of the century. Among the Popes mentioned as saints, Boniface I. (†422) is the last. On the other hand, the name of Leo the Great is probably a later addition, made after the completion of the book, and due to the fame of his saintly memory.

Such additions were frequently made later; for instance, to mention one already alluded to in connection with the consecration by John III. of the church of the Apostles at Rome, we find, in the sixth century, the name of James associated with that of Philip for the first time.[3]

But the text was not merely added to; it was altered and corrupted. For this, to some extent, the carelessness of copyists was responsible; the mass of dates and names, often of quite foreign sound, must indeed have greatly tried their

[1] See *Anal. rom.*, 1, 248.
[2] Ibid., 1, 249.
[3] Cp. above, p. 95, note 3.

attention. When, in the Frankish realm, Bishop Aunacharius received a copy of the redaction which has come down to us, it was evidently already corrupt.

He himself was responsible for new alterations, for he, or one of his clergy, remodelled it to meet the requirements of the Church of Antissiodorum. Hence the addition of Gallic saints, especially those from the neighbourhood of Auxerre, the rearrangement of the feasts according to Gallican usage, &c. Nor do we possess even his form of the Martyrology. We are still worse off, for we know the Martyrology of Aunacharius only through defective copies, revisions, and excerpts.

During the last centuries many errors have indeed been cleared up by Catholic scholars, and an improved version of the Martyrology of St. Jerome, or, more correctly, of that of Usuard, which is based on Jerome's, has been utilised, together with other sources, as foundations for the Roman Martyrology now in use.[1]

The Martyrologies, especially that of St. Jerome, still provide an ample field for criticism. Though it may not now be possible to purge the oldest Martyrology of all its defects and alterations, numerous misunderstandings and faults which have crept into the traditional text might be rectified. The reliable character of the original document, as described above, may well inspire investigators with courage and confidence. Giovanni Battista de Rossi and Louis Duchesne, by classifying and editing the manuscripts of the *Hieronymianum*, have paved the way for a future edition.

472. One source of injury to the Martyrologies was the advent of the martyr-legends and so-called Acts already spoken of.

For instance, their influence is obvious in the so-called *Martyrologium romanum parvum*. This compilation, which shows signs of being a Roman work and belongs to the end of the seventh or beginning of the eighth century, is based upon the redaction of pseudo-Jerome then in vogue, *i.e.* on one as yet free from later corruptions. In spite of this the author frequently prefers to trust to the legends already in circulation rather than to the authoritative sources which lay before him. In doubtful cases

[1] *Anal. rom.*, 1, 234 ff.: *Usuardo ed il suo martirologio.*

he is more given to following the fuller accounts of the charming legends and spurious Acts than the dry lists handed down by tradition. For instance, to him we owe it that the saintly Popes Pontian and Felix I. are, even in the present Martyrology, commemorated on the wrong day, a mistake for which the *Liber pontificalis* was originally responsible. He, too, on his own authority, fixed days commemorative of a number of Old Testament saints and of other saints mentioned in the New.[1]

## The "Liber Pontificalis"—Lists of Popes

473. The *Liber pontificalis*, so often referred to in the course of this work, deserves to be briefly dealt with here, seeing that it dates from the time of that decline of Latin literature with which we are now concerned, and of which plentiful traces are found in its pages.

Though the *Liber pontificalis* is indispensable to any one who desires to make acquaintance with the history of early Christian Rome and its Popes, the reader will be sadly disappointed if he expects to find in it a regular historical work. Its information concerning the minor details of the history of the Roman Church is both full and instructive, and the author is even tedious in his record of trivial matters which he has at heart. In his account of the years approaching his own time his main historical statements are accurate, and fill in many a gap left open by other writers. The work will therefore always retain its own peculiar importance. In consequence of the decadent age from which it proceeds, and the writer's lack of the requisite culture, it fails, however, to reach the standard of a true history of the Roman Bishops.

Just as the best Roman Martyrology placed itself under the patronage of St. Jerome, so also the *Liber pontificalis* was ascribed to Damasus, who was alleged to have been responsible at least for that portion of the history prior to his own pontificate, though, in point of fact, the work would have done little honour to such a Pope as Damasus.

What an inviting subject it should have been to throw light

[1] In *Roma sott.*, II., p. xxx., de Rossi rightly says of the *Martyrologium romanum parvum*: "L'autore non si attenne alla tradizione dei calendarii, ma la guastò," &c. In the *Bull. di. arch. crist.*, 1871, p. 91, he mentions, *e.g.* the error caused by the author transferring an *arcus Faustini* from the neighbourhood of Terni to the Aventine in Rome. Cp. *Anal. rom.*, I, 243.

upon the grand institution of the Papacy, and what a wealth of information and reliable material then lay ready for such an enterprise, for instance, in the archives of the Church, in the records of the Empire, in the inscriptions, in contemporary art, as well as in the very happenings of the day. How different would be the situation of modern historians had those days of yore—now shrouded in obscurity, or at best dimly lighted here and there by records, ecclesiastical and secular, or the chance utterances of contemporaries—been illumined by a historical work embracing every aspect of life.

The nameless author of the *Liber pontificalis* aimed merely at supplying short notices of each Pope in succession. The earlier Popes he dismisses with a few lines for each, stating where they came from, the length of their pontificate, and sometimes that they erected a church or published a decree; an invariable formula then gives the number of ordinations held, and occasionally the place of interment. In such wise does the work proceed with monotonous regularity until the writer reaches his own time. The monotony would indeed be pardonable were the list accurate and true, but it is clear that the author belonged to the lower clergy and was devoid of the sense of history. He made no attempt to find out the truth, though, as he wrote in Rome and belonged to the clergy, the means were at hand. Of the Papal archives in the most important cases, even for the events which occurred shortly before his time, he makes not the slightest use.

On the other hand, he sometimes displays a curious caprice. He repeatedly allows to early Popes a pontificate computed in years, months, and days, utterly at variance with the truth as expressed elsewhere; in such cases he has no doubt had recourse to invention in order to supply what was lacking in the sources at his command. He ascribes to these Popes things which they did not and could not have done. For instance, he makes them hold ordinations in December, even in cases where their pontificate was so short as not to include that month. At the very commencement of the work the two letters from Jerome to Damasus and from Damasus to Jerome are mere fictions of the writer.

All these details have gradually been brought to light by criticism. The halo which surrounded the book in the Middle Ages has been rudely dispelled, though to the advantage of

historical truth. For the first four hundred years, and even later, the only authority of the work is that which belongs to its own sources, and these are sometimes not to be found. So far as this period is concerned, the author's own statements cannot carry the slightest weight. On the later period he is far more trustworthy, though even there what he says of matters not touching the Roman Church requires to be carefully tested.[1]

Down to our own day the *Liber pontificalis* was ascribed to the learned Anastasius Bibliothecarius, who is even now sometimes spoken of as its author.

In point of fact, the only circumstance which can connect the book with Anastasius, who lived in the ninth century, is that it was continued down to his period by the insertion of the records of those Popes whose pontificates were later than the book's inception. The continuation of the work was, however, begun in the sixth century itself, and such additions as were gradually made are due to various writers, and, being contemporary, are sometimes of great importance.

The original author probably wrote his work under Boniface II. (†532). When recounting the events which occurred during his own life, which probably began with the pontificate of Leo the Great, his information gradually becomes fuller, and his historical blunders less frequent. This, too, enables us to explain the more personal character of the narrative and its greater lucidity and liveliness where it deals with the pontificates at the turn of the fifth and sixth century.[2]

The situation of the Roman Church in his time was, naturally, known to the author from personal observation. Regarding such matters as the erection of churches, the embellishment of holy places, and the topography of the City, he is, on the whole, quite reliable, though the great lines of a pontificate are quite beyond the range of his purview. On minor details, in spite of his tediousness, he ranks as a classic. He had before him the

[1] For instance, we must look with suspicion on his statements regarding the nationality of the earlier Popes. HARNACK, *Über die Herkunft der ersten*, 38 (37) *Päpste*, *SB. Berlin*, 1904, 2, p. 1004 ff. Cp. GRISAR, *Der Liber pontificalis*, *Zeitschr. für kath. Theol.*, 11, 1887, pp. 417–446, or, more briefly, in *Anal. rom.*, 1, pp. 1–25, where we deal with Duchesne's splendid, epoch-making edition of the *Liber pont.*

[2] Duchesne's view is that the work was first drafted under Hormisdas, and then added to by the same writer under Felix IV. My opinion, as given in my article previously cited (p. 426, in the Italian, p. 7), has been accepted by Bardenhewer (*Patr.*, p. 611) and Funk (*KL.*², 7, 1888).

inventories of the pious trusts, of the sacred furniture, &c., and occasionally vouchsafes to transcribe them literally—a circumstance which leads us to surmise that he was a member of the Lateran clergy, possibly a functionary of the Papal Vestry or *Vestiarium*.

474. The first addition made to the work embraces the pontificates of Boniface II., John II., Agapetus, and the beginning of that of Silverius. The author was clearly a witness of the frightful siege of Rome (537–538) and an opponent of Boniface II. and Silverius, though, to all seeming, not actually a schismatic.

The biography of Pope Silverius, in which he breaks off, is resumed in a tone of fulsome admiration for this Pope. We can here well perceive how the whole chronicle is a mere patchwork, a work neither of art nor of history.

After Silverius, for a long time nothing seems to have been added to the book. Not until the third decade of the following century, under Pope Honorius, did any one again venture to take the responsibility of continuing it. It is noteworthy that the whole section from Silverius to Honorius has passages of striking similarity—for instance, in the manner of dating the burials and reckoning the ordinations. On the other hand, the years immediately following Silverius can scarcely have been described by a contemporary or sixth-century author, for they are full of mistakes and inaccuracies. The sieges of Rome in 546 and in 549, for instance, are made into a single one, while, under Pelagius I., the author is quite unacquainted with the Three Chapters, though they were the main cause of that Pope's difficulties. Hence we may well assign to the time of Honorius the brief notices of the Popes after Silverius.[1]

Various continuations follow, all, like the former ones, referring at considerable length to the erections and votive offerings of the Popes. Many sections, being contemporary with the Pope described, have the value of historical sources; for, as we approach a later date, the writers seem to enlarge their view more and more.

The work proceeds in this wise down to the ninth century, when the notices become fairly complete and circumstantial, but

[1] Cp. my article, p. 429 ff.; in the Italian, p. 11 ff.

are also overburdened with trivialities, particularly with endless enumerations of the Popes' gifts to the churches of Rome.

The most important MS. of this work was discovered in the Cathedral Library of Lucca. Most of it is written in a mixture of minuscule and uncial characters, and may belong to the eighth century. At least the contents reach as far as Pope Constantine at the beginning of the eighth century.

Two distinguished scholars of our own day, relying on this and many other manuscripts, have brought to bear on this noted chronicle that industry and critical acumen which hitherto were lacking. The editions of Louis Duchesne and of Theodor Mommsen are critical masterpieces, the former containing, moreover, a large number of historical notes.[1]

475. Duchesne has made it clear that both the ancient so-called Felician **List of Popes,** which goes down to Felix IV. (III.) and the Cononian list, going down to Pope Conon, are extracts from the *Liber pontificalis.* Yet, as he points out, the *Liber pontificalis* then made use of did not exactly tally with the earlier portion as it has come down to us, but must have been a preliminary redaction, now lost. The French critic has even tried, with conspicuous success, to restore in some measure the original draft from the two lists just named.[2]

The Liberian list, which is much older than the two others, has also been proved by Duchesne to have been the main source of the *Liber pontificalis* itself. He has also corrected the text of this list with the help of his excellent edition of the *Liber pontificalis* and of his studies on the Felician and Cononian lists.[3]

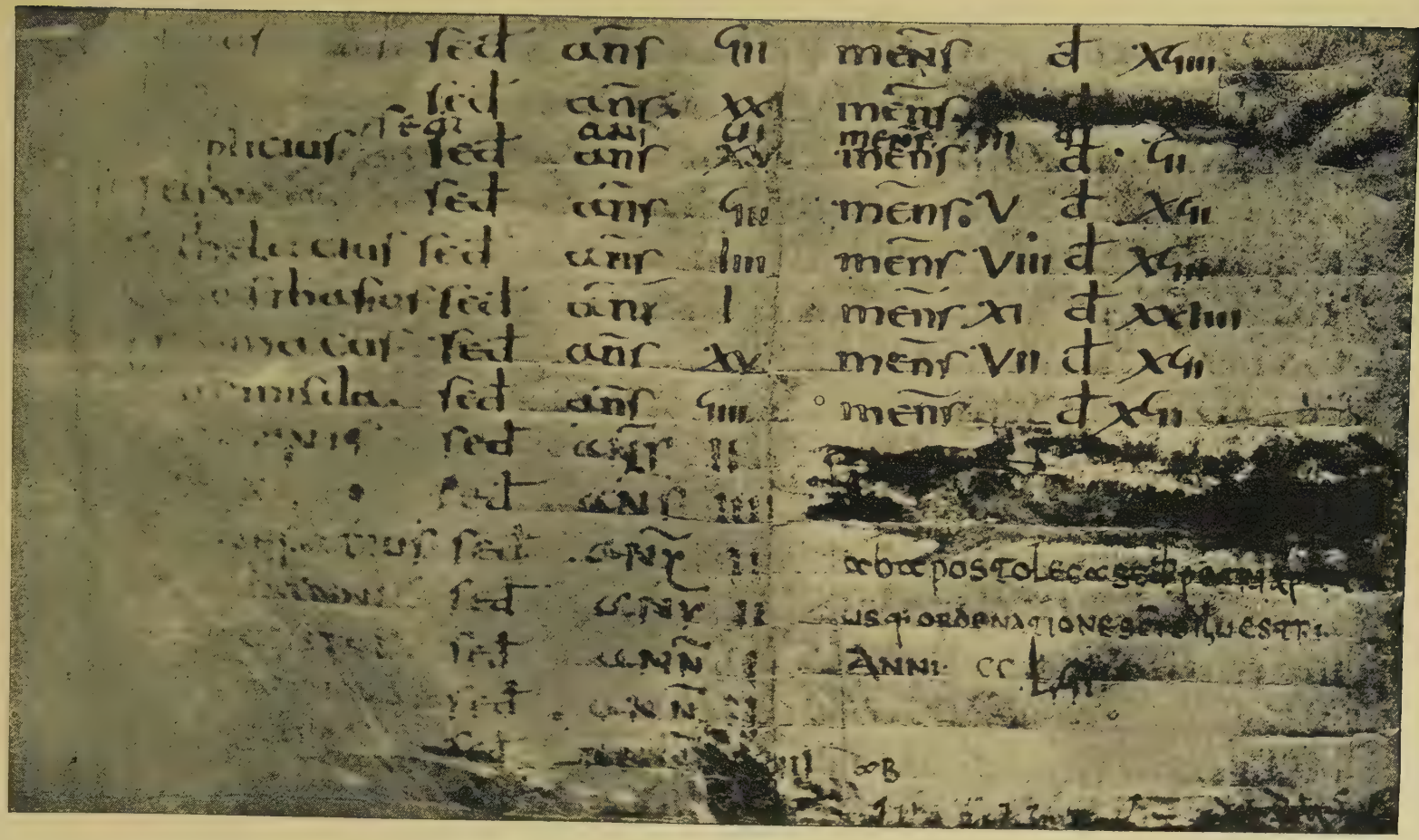
These three documents on Papal history are no mere lists of names and dates. They also supply, though with great brevity, various historical notices regarding the Popes.

There exist, however, lists of Popes giving simply the names and the length of each pontificate. There is, for instance, the

[1] DUCHESNE, *Le Liber pontificalis. Texte, introduction et commentaire,* Paris, 1886–1892. 2 vols. 4° (*Bibliothèque des écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome,* 2e série, III.). MOMMSEN, *Mon. Germ. hist., Gestorum pont. rom.,* t. 1. The latter comes down only to Pope Constantine, whereas Duchesne's comprises the various continuations till late in the Middle Ages.

[2] In Duchesne's edition, pp. 48–113 are devoted to this task of restoration. The first column gives the "*Abrégé félicien,*" the second the "*Abrégé cononien*"; the third is entitled: "*Liber pontificalis, première éd., restitution.*"

[3] See Duchesne's edition, pp. 2–9. On the three lists, cp. my article, p. 431 ff.; in Italian, p. 14 ff.



Ill. 214.—The most Ancient Extant List of Popes.

(In the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.)

Paris specimen, which can hardly fail to excite the visitor's interest, and which, on account of its antiquity, heads all the remaining lists of this kind (Ill. 214). This treasure of the Bibliothèque Nationale is a list of the Popes written in the sixth century in a codex of canons originally belonging to the Abbey of Corbey. The list originally extended only to Pope Hormisdas inclusively, and was continued by another hand till the reign of Pope Vigilius. Hence it must have been begun under Hormisdas himself.[1]

Of the two other lists of Popes next in point of age, that contained in a manuscript at Chieti also comes down to Hormisdas. It may be that some connection exists between this fact and a statement contained in Gregory the Great's register of letters. The Pope was asked whether the "Popes' Ordinations" were continued after Pope Hormisdas, and he replied that they had been, even to the time of Pope Vigilius.[2] By "Ordinations" we must here understand both the Pope's own consecration and the consecrations or ordinations conferred by him. The curious part of the matter is that in the *Liber pontificalis* the statements regarding the ordinations of the Popes between Hormisdas and Vigilius are so peculiar as to appear to come from a special source.[3]

As to the value and origin of the three earliest lists of Popes, they all appear to be founded on a single catalogue compiled in Rome towards the middle of the fifth century. Study of the other early lists of Popes confirms the view that their source is one and the same. The lost fifth-century list seems, however, to have been compiled with the aid of the Chronicles of Jerome and of Prosper of Aquitania, to judge by peculiarities in its names and dates. Nevertheless the chronology of the remaining lists and even of the original one, cannot be fully trusted until after the

[1] On the Codex mentioned belonging to the Paris Bibl. Nat. (n. 12097), from which our illustration is taken, see DUCHESNE, *Liber pont.*, I, p. xiv., and MAASSEN, *Gesch. der Quellen*, pp. 556–574. The list as far as Hormisdas is by an early sixth-century hand. On Ill. 214 the names given are those of Xystus III. (9 years, &c.), Leo (20 years, &c.), Hilary (between the lines), Simplicius, Felix III., Gelasius, Anastasius, Symmachus, Hormisdas, John, Felix IV., Boniface, John, Agapetus, Silverius, and Vigilius. It was written between 537 and 555. The writing much resembles the Veronese codex of Sulpicius Severus, written in 517 (ZANGEMEISTER AND WATTENBACH, Pl. 32). Below, to the right, is seen the total of years. Cp. Duchesne's edition of the list, l.c. I, p. 16, and the specimens of writing from it in ZANGEMEISTER AND WATTENBACH, *Exempla codicum lat.*, Pl. 40, and DAHN, *Urgesch. der germ. Völker*, 4, 301.

[2] *Registrum Gregorii M.*, 9, n. 147 (9, n. 52). Cp. DUCHESNE, *Mélanges d'arch. et d'hist.*, 1898, p. 403; GRISAR, *Anal. rom.*, I, 686.

[3] HARNACK, *Über die Ordinationen im Papstbuch* (*SB. Berlin*, 1897, p. 761 ff.).

time of Siricius (384). For the earlier period, as regards both the *Liber pontificalis* and the Liberian Catalogue, we are obliged to have recourse to other authorities for the chronology of the Popes. A full discussion of these lists of the early Popes does not, however, belong to the scope of this work.[1]

One circumstance should, however, be given due prominence, and that is, that the list of the early Roman Bishops, beginning with St. Peter, compares very favourably with other catalogues of Bishops, as to the certainty both of the succession and the names, for whereas here no fiction and falsehood have penetrated, the *series episcoporum* of other Churches were a favourite ground for the play of fancy. Dioceses, from the close of antiquity, were wont to claim descent from celebrated saintly founders, and, if possible, to trace their origin to disciples of the Apostles, especially to missioners sent by St. Peter.

The Church of Constantinople, in its efforts to assert its equality with Old Rome, even ascribed its foundation to an Apostle, *viz.* to Andrew, St. Peter's brother. As a matter of fact, previous to the establishment of the new Capital by Constantine the Great, only one single Bishop is known with certainty to have ruled over Byzantium, which in those days was a place of no great importance. This Bishop was Metrophanes, the predecessor of Alexander, who was Bishop when Constantine transferred his residence. In spite of this, pseudo-Dorotheus, in his synopsis of the History of the Constantinopolitan Bishops, invents a long series of Bishops preceding Metrophanes. He goes back to St. Andrew, the "first called" (Protocletos), as the Greeks were wont to designate this Apostle, called by Christ to the Apostleship even before St. Peter. In this wise the Apostolic origin of the See of New Rome came to be everywhere acknowledged in the East, though it had no historical foundation.[2]

## The Better Legends and Gregory of Tours—The "Gelasian Decree"

476. Just as amidst the spurious lists of Bishops we find others as accurate as those of Rome, so also the legendary

[1] DUCHESNE, *Liber pont.*, I, pp. I ff., xii. ff., lxxviii. ff.

[2] Cp. CUPER, *Dissert. hist. chron. de patriarchis Constantinop.* (*Acta SS.*, 1 August., § 1. HERGENRÖTHER, *Photius*, I, 7. The spurious list may have begun to circulate only at the time of Photius. It will be found in full in KYRIAKOS, Ἐκκλησιαστικὴ Ἱστορία, tom. 3, p. 476.

literature and narratives of the period occasionally contain works of real historical worth. Two such legends we shall instance as examples of good popular literature, though, unhappily, they will not be from the lives of saints living in the city of Rome, for, to tell the truth, the stories of the Roman saints are too overloaded with fiction to awaken the least confidence. This sad fact was perhaps a result of the rivalry of Rome's titular churches, each striving to glorify its foundation; or perhaps it arose from the fast increasing demand of foreign pilgrims to the holy tombs of the metropolis for the story of their favourite saints. One thing is certain, the City containing the greatest and richest materials in the whole world, particularly on account of the wholesale destruction of documents which had taken place in this centre of persecution, afforded a good starting-point for baseless legends.

Among the narratives which had not Rome for their birthplace, that of the Abbot Eugippius on St. Severinus and the many stories of Gregory, Bishop of Tours, are pre-eminent for their naturalness and simplicity. Their style, too, has the great advantage of being free from the artificial pedantry of the period, and, in spite of the excessive credulity with which Gregory of Tours has been charged, they were pioneers of the really useful books for the childish and barbarous ages yet to come. When no effort was made to secure effect by a perverted style, the very beauty and grandeur of the things described led, as in the case of the two authors mentioned, to a natural and attractive manner of expression.

The valuable life of St. Severinus, the Apostle of Noricum, was written by Eugippius about the year 511. In the simplest colours it depicts the missioner's great struggle for Christian civilisation against the remains of Roman Paganism on the one hand, and, on the other, against the barbarism introduced by the Northern immigrants. At the end we have a full account of how the body of the saint, soon after his death, was brought from the banks of the Danube to Italy, that it might there find safe shelter (488). His faithful disciples brought him to Naples, and buried him on the rocky promontory, now the Pizzofalcone, where they transformed the quondam villa of Lucullus into a monastery. The picture of the saint and his pious monks, inheriting the lavish splendour of Lucullus, is one well in keeping with that of St. Benedict taking possession of Nero's Villa on the Upper Anio,

or that of St. Columban settling with his followers in the ancient baths of Luxovium. Such incidents bear striking testimony to the changes of the times.[1]

477. In the works of Gregory, Bishop of Tours, we fortunately no longer meet that effort to retain the waning glories of classicism so noticeable in Ennodius and Venantius Fortunatus; his edifying narratives are written in popular language and without constraint. Indeed, the contrast between his style and that of the learned schools of his times is very striking. It was to his freedom from pedantry, and to his subjects being so well in keeping with the spirit of the early Middle Ages, that his writings owed their popularity. The Frankish author assiduously collects everything which comes to his knowledge, particularly extraordinary events, and then recounts them with ease and at great length. He paints a wonderfully true picture of life in his time, even of the life at the royal courts, quite oblivious of the possibility of making himself enemies among the mighty by the unflattering character of some of his narratives. This Bishop, who died about the year 594, was the father of Frankish history.[2]

Besides his principal work, *i.e.* his ten books on the history of the Franks, Gregory wrote others—for instance, one on the Lives of the Fathers, in which he tells the story of twenty saintly bishops and monks of Gaul, and, as most of them were his contemporaries, and were, some of them, personally known to him, what he says of them is fresh and attractive. He further wrote seven books on Miracles—a subject in which he delighted—four of them being on the miracles of St. Martin, his great predecessor in the See of Tours. He here has much to say of what took place in his own day, and under his very eyes, at the tomb of the Apostle of Gaul, which even then was already a much frequented shrine. There can of course be no doubt that, as we admitted previously, he is too willing to give a place to insufficiently authenticated miracles which he had from hearsay; he is, however, too sincere and too anxious about the truth to be responsible for any inventions of his own.

[1] *Eugippii Vita S. Severini.* The translation to castrum Lucullanum, c. 46. New editions of this life by SAUPPE, *Mon. Germ. hist., Auctt. antiq.*, I, pars 2; KNÖLL, *Corp. script. eccles. Vindob.*, ix.; and, best of all, by MOMMSEN, *Scriptores rer. germ. in usum schol.*, 1898.

[2] LOEBELL, *Gregor von Tours und seine Zeit*[2] (1869). WATTENBACH, *Geschichtsquellen*[6], I, 94 to 102. BONNET, *Le Latin de Grégoire de Tours* (1890).

One circumstance of special interest to us is, that Gregory, when writing of matters Roman, in perfect good faith makes use of the spurious martyr-legends already in circulation. His unpretending and childlike faith seized with avidity on the edifying material provided by Rome, and circulated throughout the world by pilgrims from the Eternal City. His work on the "Glory of the Martyrs" undoubtedly contributed to popularise several of the Roman martyrs among the new nations of the West, and to stimulate the holy craving to visit their tombs, at the headquarters of the Papacy.

With regard to the most revered of all Roman tombs, that of St. Peter on the Vatican Hill, the Frankish writer has left us the most instructive and minute description of any which have come down to us, excepting that in the *Liber pontificalis*. Throughout his work, the city of Rome, in which, as he recalls, Peter established his See and laid down his life with Paul, appears as the "Head of the World." Though other Bishops may call their Sees "Apostolic," the Roman is *the* "Apostolic See." The successor of Peter is the "Ruler of the Church"; and in his narratives we find the *papa urbis Romae*, as he calls him, authoritatively interfering when difficult questions are raised.[1]

Gregory of Tours held Roman culture in high esteem, and, as a young man, he had sedulously striven to profit by it so far as the means of the time allowed. Yet he rightly preferred, when writing for his contemporaries, to adopt a manner entirely different from that of the schools. At the same time he was quite conscious of the great gulf fixed between his artless style and that of Roman literature. For instance, when preparing to relate the miracles of St. Martin, he tells us how his mother appeared to him in a dream, in order to urge him to begin the work regardless of his want of classical polish. To his plea that his style was too "rustic," she refused to listen. In this wise he testifies to the struggle which went on within him, and at the same time to his conviction that, in spite of the education he had enjoyed, he was utterly unable to reach the ancient standard in point of polish and well-turned phraseology.[2]

If Gregory ever experienced any hesitation to admit into his

[1] Greg. on the Tomb of Peter: *In gloria mart.*, c. 27, ed. KRUSCH (*Mon. Germ. hist., Scriptt. merov.*), p. 504; *P.L.*, LXXI., 728. Cp. GRISAR, *Anal. rom.*, 1, 285, 301 ff. For the other passages concerning Rome, see GRISAR, ibid., 356 ff.

[2] *De miraculis S. Martini*, Praef.

work baseless and fictitious martyr legends, he nowhere informs us of it. Yet, with but little trouble, he might have seen how ill-founded and self-contradictory were many of the stories he tells. Indeed, the use and spread of such legends had already been denounced by Rome, though not with sufficient publicity to be of any avail. We are alluding to the so-called "Gelasian Decree," the consideration of which will form a fitting conclusion to this chapter on history and legend at the close of antiquity.

478. It is unfortunate that so little is known of the remarkable decree just mentioned. Its very authenticity is open to question, though it is certain that it originated before Gregory's time. It is indeed a curious fate which ordained that the one decree which condemns the use of apocryphal works should itself be suspected of being a forgery.

The decree contains a whole list of books of which the use is prohibited in the Catholic Church, and comprises not only Biblical Apocrypha, but also other works, both dogmatic and historical.[1]

The decree, without the slightest attempt to proceed in orderly fashion, lists haphazard a number of books, some of which are unorthodox, whilst the only fault of the others is that they were written under an assumed name. Lengthy as it is, the list is still very far from being complete. The unknown author seems to have sought an excuse for his omissions in his prefatory remark: Whatever heretics and schismatics have written, the Roman Church has always rejected, hence the writer will mention only those few works which he recalls.

For instance, mixed up among other works, he mentions the three apocryphal Gospels which we have already found used on celebrated monuments of art, *viz.* pseudo-Matthew, the Proto-evangelium, and the Gospel of the Infancy. As already stated, he enumerates nine other Gospels. He condemns not only the Apostolic Canons—which is somewhat surprising, seeing the respect shown them by Dionysius Exiguus—but even the Apostolic Constitutions; at least we may take it that the *Iussa* [*Lusa*] *Apostolorum*, of which he speaks, refers to the latter.

[1] For the decree, THIEL, *Epist. rom. pont.*, p. 454 ff. It describes the books mentioned as "*libri non recipiendi*," as "*repudiati*," as "*ab omni romana catholica et apostolica ecclesia eliminati*," as "*a catholicis vitandi*," and as "*quos nullatenus recipit catholica et apostolica romana ecclesia.*"

The style of the decree is singularly careless, and this, as well as the lack of arrangement of the contents, and the uncertainty of its drift, makes it differ widely from the genuine decrees of the Roman Church, particularly from those of Pope Gelasius. We may take it as certain that it did not emanate from him, though from early times it bore his name. Nor could it well be by Pope Hormisdas, though one of the critics who edited the work sees his hand in some of the additions. We may, however, ascribe the decree to the time of Hormisdas, or at least to the early part of the sixth century.[1]

It is not impossible that the document, which shows such manifest signs of having been hastily put together, was nothing but the rough draft of a decree or canon to be passed by the Roman Church, but respecting which no details have come down to us. In the MSS. it is found together with the three decrees on the Canon of Holy Scripture, on the Holy Trinity, and on the Patriarchal Sees which we have previously ascribed to Pope Damasus, and which were partly repeated by Gelasius, and perhaps also by Hormisdas. But though the worth and authenticity of the so-called Gelasian list of forbidden books is somewhat doubtful, this does not in the least detract from the authority of the other three decrees.[2]

479. At the cost of a deal of toil, much has already been done to clear the ground of history from the Apocrypha and legends which have encumbered it since the decline of ancient culture, and even to-day much labour is still being expended on the removal of the accumulated rubbish. This may serve to reassure the reader, if the above long enumeration of blunders and forgeries has perchance awakened in him a certain feeling of distrust even of the Church's real traditions. Certainty is after all only to be attained at the price of sacrificing falsehood to criticism. The sources which have supplied us with material for our History of Rome and the Popes are very different from that fictitious literature which falsely claims the right to rank among the sources of

[1] ROUX (*Le pape Gélase I^er^*, p. 169 ff.) denies its authenticity. See my remarks in *Zeitschr. für kath. Theol.*, 8 (1884), 204 ff. FRIEDRICH (*SB. der bayr. Akad. der W., phil.-hist. Kl.*, 1888, 1, 54 ff.) considers the decree a private compilation. Cp. the works of Friedrich and Thiel already quoted, vol. i. p. 335, note 2. The question is by no means settled.

[2] For these decrees of Pope Damasus, see above, vol. i. p. 337 ff.

history. Even when we have been compelled to have recourse to works in which truth is mingled with error, we have at least endeavoured to sift conscientiously what is trustworthy from that which is not. All we have hitherto said concerning the Papacy and the Eternal City has invariably been based on the real sources of historical knowledge—on official and contemporary documents of the Popes, on monuments which are still before our eyes, and on the statements of the best informed and most veracious chroniclers. Our historical narrative will continue to proceed on these same lines. We shall not allow either fear or favour to deter us from telling the truth in its entirety. It has been rightly said that now, if ever, the history of the Popes requires that the truth should be told, and nothing but the truth. "If thou hast ever so slightly swerved from the straight way," writes Jerome, "no matter whether to the right or to the left, thou hast forsaken the true road." Cassiodorus, too, points out that everything stated by the historian of the Church is useful for instruction and edification, and allows us to perceive the hand of Providence guiding the course of human affairs. Surely this thought should encourage us to tell the truth under all circumstances, even when by doing so we may seem disrespectful to persons or institutions which we rightly hold in veneration.[1]

[1] HIERONYM., *Comment. in Matth.*, 6, 1; *P.L.*, XXII., 42. Jerome in the sentence quoted above is speaking of virtues in general, but the historian's first and leading virtue is veracity. CASSIOD., *De instit. div. litt.*, 2, c. 17.

# CHAPTER III

## LANGUAGE AND ART OF DECLINING ROME

### Vulgar Latin—The Church's Language

480. The decline of education and literature was marked by the decay of classic Latinity and the rise of vulgar Latin.

The Latin literary language had indeed never been general among all people of education. Even in classical Rome, plebeians and patricians in everyday life expressed themselves otherwise than the prose-writers and poets whom we are accustomed to look on as the sole representatives of the Latin language. The difference between the two fashions of speech was very great, and sometimes even greater than that existing to-day between popular dialects and the written language. The Latin of the Roman lower classes was called *lingua vulgaris*. The speech of the rural population, or *lingua rustica*, ranked even lower than that of the towns; on the other hand, very likely the speech of the more educated was somewhat better than the common or vulgar idiom, though they, too, had to acquire at the cost of some difficulty their knowledge of the language as written.[1]

When, towards the end of the Empire, the population both of the towns and of the country began to dwindle; when the Latins began to mix with emancipated slaves of every nation, and with the barbarian conquerors of the Roman provinces; when, amidst the universal upheaval, literature and the schools were submerged, vulgar Latin was obliged to admit more and more of the foreign element. Thereby, however, it increased its boundaries and its power, though at the expense of the language of Cæsar and Cicero. Finally the popular language found its way into literature, and its success was assured.

As is well known, the Romance languages proceeded from the vulgar Latin, the popular speech in its last state of disorder and corruption being variously modified by the different races and in

[1] Teuffel-Schwabe, p. 1227; Monceaux, *Le latin vulgaire* (*Rev. des deux-mondes*, 106 (1891), 429–448), and also separately.

the several countries. According to an opinion once common, held, for instance, by Lorenzo Valla, matters happened otherwise, and it was the "Goths and Vandals" who destroyed the Latin language in Italy, substituting their own. Such a theory, which it is needless to discuss here, could have been advanced only when philology was yet in its infancy.[1]

As a matter of fact we meet the vulgar Latin among the Latin comic writers even of the best period. In ancient Rome it was common, for instance, to use "caballo," for "*equus*," "sommo," for "*somnus*," "oro" for "*aurum*," "oricla" for "*auricula*." An orator in the Senate would, however, take good care to make use of no such vulgar words. It is just these popular words which asserted themselves in Italian and in French, where we have cheval, cavallo (horse), sommeil, sonno (sleep), or, oro (gold), oreille, orecchia or orecchio (ear). Or again, the word *hostis*, from the earliest Latin days, in the mouth of the populace meant a stranger or traveller, and in this popular sense, and not as in the least implying any "hostility," it has passed into the two Romance languages mentioned. Hôte, hôtellerie, oste, osteria (host, hostel) retain the ancient popular meaning which, in good Latin, would be associated with *hospes*.

In the lengthy process which ended in popular Latin making its triumphal entry into literature, the Church took a part which is not open to dispute.

The Church's preachers sought above all things to make themselves understood by the people. The Church's theologians were also faced by the task of finding fresh means of expressing ideas which then were novel. As the refined language of the schools was found less handy owing to its want of the needful flexibility, spirituality, and depth, many new terms were coined with the help of the more pliant Latin spoken by the people. Once introduced into current usage, these terms had to be retained, as otherwise endless confusion would have been the result.

"Our business," says Tertullian, "is to win souls by means of religion, and not to make a show of fine language." Augustine, in a homily, likewise tells his hearers: "I often use words which

[1] VALLA, *Elegantiarum lib.* 3, Praef.: "*Postquam hae gentes* [*Gothi et Vandali*] *semel iterumque Italiae influentes Romam ceperunt, ut imperium eorum, ita linguam quoque, quemadmodum aliqui putant, accepimus et plurimi forsan ex illis oriundi sumus.*"

are not good Latin, but I do so that you may the better understand me." And again he says: "I would rather be called to order by the grammarians, than not be understood by the people."[1]

The earliest Latin translations of the Scriptures, known as the **Itala**, were in vulgar Latin, and furnished the foundation on which the ecclesiastical language was built. Whether these translations really came from Africa, as was once commonly supposed, is very doubtful. There is perhaps better reason to claim that they were made in Italy or even in Rome. They follow closely the Greek, and for the Old Testament are based on the Septuagint as it existed before the composition of the Hexapla. This accounts for the number of Greek and Hebrew idioms which the Itala contained, and which passed into the Church's language. To some extent, too, the sonorous and imaginative tone of the Greek and Hebrew languages also entered into Church-Latin by way of the old translations of the Bible.[2]

481. No little influence on the formation of religious and theological Latin was exercised by Cyprian, Tertullian, and Augustine. They were all Africans, a circumstance which explains many striking peculiarities of Church-Latin. The works of these three authors were by no means devoid of grace, Augustine particularly, the quondam rhetor, often reaches perfection both in language and style. All three, however, betray the linguistic influence of their surroundings, and are given to the inflated mode of writing so prevalent in North Africa. North African prose was sonorous to excess, for in those regions the so-called **Asiatic style** was still in vogue with its rhetorical mannerisms, which are noticeable even in earlier Greek and Latin writers who came under Asiatic influence. In the African provinces of the Empire, Latin was moreover situated between the zone of the Libyan language, now spoken by the Berbers,

[1] AUGUSTINUS, *Enarr. in ps.* 138, n. 20: "*Melius est reprehendant nos grammatici quam non intelligant populi.*" Cp. HIERONYMUS, *Ep.* 64 *ad Fabiolam*, c. 11: "*Volo pro legentis facilitate abuti sermone vulgato.*" MONCEAUX, l.c., p. 440.

[2] On the Itala, see TEUFFEL-SCHWABE, p. 942. Ziegler is among the opponents of an African origin, *Die lateinischen Bibelübersetzungen vor Hieronymus*, 1879. E. RANKE (*Fragmenta versionis S. Script. antehieronym.*, 1868, p. 3) says of its Roman origin: "*quum auspiciis, ut omnino credibile est, ecclesiae romanae prodierit.*" According to J. R. Harris (*A Study of the Codex Bezae*, 1893), the Itala was in existence as early as the beginning of the second century.

and the Punic, which was retained down to the Arab conquest, and, to add to the confusion, Hebrew was also spoken here and there. The vicinity of these three different languages explains not only the importation of certain foreign elements into African Latin, but also its undue emphasis and exuberant expression as well as its grandiloquence and sonorousness. Of all this the Church's language bears the marks.[1]

In Church-Latin we find a **rhythmic measure** used even in the prose portions of the liturgy. Something similar may, however, be noticed in like productions of antiquity, both Greek and Latin. The hymns, which were no longer ruled by prosodial quantity like the classical poems, but by the tonic accent which here forms the metre, remained in the Church's use. In the liturgical prose, it is easy to perceive the rhythm in the early prayers used in the Mass on Sundays, and in the venerable Prefaces which lead up to the Canon. To the "cursus planus,"—to use the name invented by later grammarians—belong, for instance, the endings, "*nóstris ìnfúnde*," "*largíre cùlpárum*," "*devotiónis àffectu*," "*reficiámur ìn‿ménte*"; to the "cursus tardus": "*dígnos èfficiant*," "*sacraménta quaè‿súmpsimus*"; to the "cursus velox": "*glóriàm pérducámur*," "*actiónibus érudíta*," "*Spíritus sáncti Déus.*" Pope Gelasius, whose name is associated with the composition of the second-oldest sacramentary, was also an African by birth, a circumstance which must likewise be kept in view when dealing with the Church's Latin. We are told that Gelasius wrote certain liturgical and theological documents "*cauto et delimato sermone*," and this praise, found in an early source, is truly due to many of the Church's early prayers, especially to those for each Sunday of the ecclesiastical year, whether they were actually composed by Gelasius, or not.[2]

The influence of the Church on the Latin literary language was in no sense disadvantageous, but rather tended to preserve it. Many church writers, by the individuality of their style, so different from the pedantry of the schools, really contributed to the reinvigoration and revival of literature. The revival was, however, not to last, and the doom of Latin literature was already sealed.

[1] NORDEN, *Die antike Kunstprosa*, pp. 596 ff., 634 ff. MONCEAUX, l.c., p. 441.

[2] NORDEN, ibid., pp. 841 ff., 909 ff., 950 ff. MONCEAUX, l.c., p. 442. *Liber pont.*, I, 255, *Gelasius*, n. 74, and DUCHESNE, note 14. A. DE SANTI, *Il cursus nella storia letteraria e nella liturgia* (ed. ampliata, Rom., 1903).

482. Turning our attention more closely to the changes in the Latin vocabulary introduced in the sixth century and even earlier, we find many **Byzantine** expressions. Ever since Italy had been ruled from the East, and a crowd of Greek officials and mercenaries had descended on the country, such an influence was inevitable. The language, too, gradually lost all power of resistance in consequence of the want of schools and of good Latin models. The Greeks, through their contributions to the Latin tongue, returned the Romans even more than they had themselves received.

Previous to that period many Western expressions had made their way into Greek. Particularly since the reforms carried out by Diocletian and Constantine, official Greek, and, finally, even everyday Greek, had given admission to a great number of Latin words, which in the Eastern characters have indeed a strange appearance, though constantly met with; such are "Kentourion," "Komes," "Doux," "Desertor," "Koustodia," &c.[1]

On the other side, Greek words have also invaded Latin. St. Benedict, in his celebrated Rule, not only uses Greek words for liturgical matters, as the Church herself had done before, *e.g.* "letania," "ebdomadarius," "synaxis," "antefana" (Benedict's spelling for "antiphona"), but even employs so odd-sounding a word as "senpecta" (from συμπαίκτης, playmate) in the meaning of member of the community. Probably the Saint was acquainted to some extent with Greek, though it can be proved that he did not read Greek writers in the original, but in the translation of Rufinus.

483. Benedict's Latin had come under the influence of the *latinitas vulgaris* or *rustica*, the result being that he makes not a few grammatical mistakes. For instance, when speaking of the brethren's repose at night, he says: "*pausent in lecta sua*," where "*pausare*" (to rest) comes from the Greek παύεσθαι, and the use of the nominative instead of the ablative is due to the prevalence of vulgar Latin.

If philology at the present time is turning with special interest to the last of the Latins, hitherto so little studied, it is because it finds a great new sphere of action among these writers. It

[1] Κεντουρίων, κώμης, δούξ, δεσέρτωρ, κουστωδία, νέρβος, πραιτώριον, δεπόσιτα, βῆλον, &c.

is rightly anxious to investigate both the popular speech of earlier days and the beginnings of the Romance languages. Among the writers of those days Benedict deserves special attention.

On account of the extent to which his Rule was adopted, it greatly influenced the language, particularly in certain fields. This is partly due to the fact that the Rule has been preserved almost intact in its ancient form, for instance in the MSS. of St. Gall, Vienna, Monte-Cassino, and of Oxford. The Rule as it left the hand of the founder, with all its defects in style and construction, can be restored with tolerable certainty with the help of these and other codices. Out of respect for the Saint, the early copyists did not venture to correct his errors. Many other writers of the period were treated otherwise, so that it is unfortunately difficult now to form a correct opinion of the real quality of their Latin until the oldest and most faithful codices shall have been examined.[1]

St. Benedict was, without a doubt, well versed in learning, having attended the schools of Rome before fleeing from the world. If, therefore, he allows so many faults of language to escape him, this merely proves him to have been too absorbed by the importance of his subject to attach any weight to its form, which possibly he intended to improve later, though he does not seem to have done so.

Cassiodorus, who wrote at the same time, and who also had a Roman training, compared with Benedict, is a real classic despite his laboured and long-winded manner. By his very faults he demonstrates his attachment to classical polish.

[1] Cp. WÖLFFLIN, *Das Latein Benedikts von Nursia* (*Archiv für lateinische Lexikographie und Grammatik*, 9 (1896), 493–521). Other instances from the Rule: "*tres lectiones cum responsoria sua*" (9, 20); "*de sedilia sua surgant*" (9, 15); "*si fallitus fuerit*" (from *fallere*, 45, 3); "*propter diversorum infirmitatibus*" (39, 3); "*excepto hos, quos . . . praetulerit*" (instead of "*exceptis his*," 63, 13). These extracts are from the Rule edited by Wölfflin. Cp. his article *Benedikt von Nursia und seine Mönchsregel*, *SB. der bayr. Akad.*, 1895, p. 429–452. Wölfflin was followed by Traube, who submitted the language of the Rule to a fresh examination: *Textgesch. der Regula S. Benedicti*, in *Abh. der bayr. Akad.*, vol. xxi., 3, p. 599–731. He shows that the first three MSS. mentioned above most closely resemble the original (destroyed in 896 during the fire at the monastery of Teano). The Oxford Codex, followed by Wölfflin, contains merely the interpolated edition of the Rule made by Abbot Simplicius, *ca.* 560, which was the text commonly used until about the year 800. Cp. WEYMAN, *Hist. Jahrb.*, 1898, p. 726 ff. Traube (see above, p. 20, note 1) failed to edit the Rule. In 1892 appeared a new edition by E. Schmidt, O.S.B., made on several MSS., who also had an article on *Die wissenschaftliche Bildung des hl. Benedikt* (*Studien und Mitth. des Benediktiner- und Cistercienserordens*, 9, 1888, 57 ff., 234 ff., 361 ff., 553 ff.

## Some Representatives of Latin in its Decline

484. To take some other works, the humble author of the *Liber pontificalis* betrays by his Latin the sad state of the popular language at the time he wrote, for his speech swarms with grammatical faults. Those who continued his chronicle down to Carlovingian times are not one whit better. For instance, in the notice on Pope Pelagius I. we read: "*Initiata est basilica apostolorum Philippi et Iacobi; qui dum initiaretur*," &c. And previously: "*Pelagius in ambone ascendit.*" Of his successor, John III., it states that he was "*ex patre Anastasio inlustrio*" (for "*inlustri*"), and further, "*Hic instituit ut ministraretur oblationem*" for "*oblatio.*"[1]

We can see thereby that the authors of the *Liber pontificalis* were members of the lower clergy, in no wise above the rest of the common people, whose acquaintance, moreover, with the studies then being pursued at Rome was somewhat remote. For, even then, the City was not devoid of schools where pupils were taught to avoid such blunders and to select their words so as to express themselves with grace and lucidity.

The discipline of such a learning is pleasantly conspicuous in Gregory the Great, towards the close of the sixth century. He himself, it is true, speaks humbly of his own manner of writing: "I make no effort to avoid barbarisms, I pay no heed to the position of the prepositions or their case." He even declares that he deems it "very unfitting to make the words of heavenly doctrine submit to the rules of Donatus." We should, however, be doing the Pope an injustice did we take such declarations too literally. His writings are free from faults of grammar. It is true his language is far from being as pure and harmonious as that of the classics, or even of some of the earlier Fathers. Nevertheless his Latin is always good and to the point, and occasionally not wanting in quiet elegance and dignity, particularly when he avoids his common failing of lingering too long over his subject or treating it allegorically.[2]

The documents drafted at the Papal Curia long maintained

[1] Ed. DUCHESNE, I, 303, n. 109; I, 305, n. 110.

[2] "*Non barbarismi confusionem devito*," &c. *Epist. ad Leandrum, ante Praef. Moral.*, c. 5; *P.L.*, LXXV., 516.

a high standard with regard both to style and linguistic precision. In the sixth and seventh centuries they rank above the official deeds of the various government offices and courts; they are, for instance, far better than those found in the archives of the Merovingian kings. In the eighth century, however, before the Carlovingian revival had touched Rome, the Papal letters, so far at least as we can judge from the form in which they have come down to us, were sharing in the general decay of language.

Among the few writers of the Merovingian kingdom was Gregory of Tours, of whom we have already spoken. In spite of his education and talent, his is a debased and faulty Latin. We stated above that he wisely shook himself free from the academical rhetoric in vogue; we may now add that his books make us vividly realise the fate of Latin, even in Rome itself. The Bishop of Tours, in his mode of speech, follows largely the *lingua vulgaris*. He even charges himself with this at the beginning of several of his works, and the self-accusation, which was exaggerated in the case of Gregory the Great, is quite justified in that of his namesake of Tours. "Pardon me," he says, "if I offend against the laws of grammar with regard to letters and syllables." He depicts his readers rightly scolding him as follows: "Thou canst not even distinguish nouns, masculine words thou mistakest for feminine, and feminine for masculine, or, instead of either, thou usest the neuter. Even the prepositions thou knowest not how to use, and, against all learned authority, thou puttest an accusative instead of an ablative, and *vice versa*." [1]

In such wise does he humorously own his faults. As a matter of fact, one could well answer him: "Quite so, but thine avowal falleth short of the truth, for thou confoundest not the cases alone but even the moods, playing havoc with the whole Latin conjugation by using auxiliary verbs to express future and past. Thou art reducing the declensions to two cases—one direct, and the other indirect, and expressing the remainder with the help of prepositions."

By closely examining the imperfections of his style, one obtains an insight into the transition from Latin to French. In Italy Latin underwent a similar process before arriving at the Italian

[1] GREG. TUR., *De gloria confessorum*, Praefatio. Cp. *Hist. Franc.*, Praef., where the author excuses himself with the remark that he had often noted with surprise that whereas few people understood a pedantic writer, many could follow the words of a plain man.

of to-day. Two cases only were retained in the Romance languages, final syllables were disregarded, and the relationship of the words was expressed by prepositions. The non-Latin words, purloined by the Frankish writer from the popular vocabulary of his country, were to become an ornament of the French language, giving it an aspect of its own and all the charms of youth.[1]

With all its defects of style, the Frankish history written by Gregory of Tours provides us, however, with some delightful reading, is a homely account of actual facts, and is all the more valuable from being the earliest history of the nation.

485. It is a surprising fact that in the sixth century the Greek Empire also produced two Latin works of great interest in the history of the language. Constantinople, or New Rome, the seat of the Empire, held the whole world in thrall, even from an intellectual point of view, and, from the City on the Bosphorus, a civilisation deserving of all respect was spreading wherever Byzantine influence was felt.

It was in Latin, and at Constantinople, under the Emperor Anastasius, that Priscianus, the grammarian, wrote the best and fullest work in existence on the Latin language, namely, his *Institutiones grammaticae*, comprising eighteen books. The MSS. show it to have been copied "*in urbe Roma Constantinopoli*" by Flavius Theodorus, an "antiquarius" or engrosser. The number of MSS. proves the extent to which Priscianus was studied during the Middle Ages. Nor was he the only Latin grammarian in the East, for we must also reckon his disciples, Eutyches, Theodorus, Flavianus, and others.[2]

The other Latin work penned by a Greek has not attained such wide celebrity as the first, on account of the nature of its contents. For the history of the decline of the Latin tongue, it is, however, very valuable, and is of some significance in the history of civilisation. We refer to Anthimus' *De observatione ciborum*, a sort of guide for housekeepers and cooks, written at the beginning of the sixth century and dedicated to King Theodoric. The Greek author had learnt his Latin in Italy

[1] MONCEAUX, *Le latin vulgaire*, p. 444.
[2] On Priscianus, see TEUFFEL-SCHWABE, p. 1242. The chief edition is in KEIL, *Grammatici latini*, vols. ii. and iii. Leipzig, 1855–1859.

during the Gothic period, and his language is accordingly colloquial rather than literary; indeed, he acquaints us admirably with the vulgar idiom then in vogue in Italy. For instance, he uses "*de*" for the genitive and "*ille*" for the article, two words retained in Italian. The verb "to become" he renders by "*devenire*," and "good evening" by "*bona sera*." His word "*caballicare*" has since grown into "cavalcare," and "*medietas*" into "medietà," &c.[1]

486. Even better witnesses to the condition of the language in Rome exist in a number of extant inscriptions of the sixth century, which, with unimpeachable certainty, show the decline of grammar in the Capital of the Latin world. Here we have no fear of the work having been touched up by later copyists, but may rest assured that we have before us the actual language of the day.[2]

The two following examples are not epitaphs on people of the lower class, carelessly chiselled by some ignorant stonemason, like so many of the faulty inscriptions in the catacombs. Everything points to the epitaphs in question having been composed and executed according to the best talent of the day. Both inscriptions belong to the close of the sixth century.

One is that metrical epitaph of Eugenius, the notary, and his family, inscribed on a massive marble tablet which contains the praise of his little son, Boethius (see above, p. 101). At the end it is stated that provision had been made by will for oblations and lights: "*ex testamenti paginam ad oblatione vel luminaria*." The garden given for this purpose lay, as the epitaph says, "*iuxta porta portuense*"; in addition a portion of a *fundus* or estate was also devised as a gift: "*fundi quod est constitutum via labicana inter affines fundi capitiniani*," &c.[3]

The second epitaph is that of Eusebius, near St. Paul's Basilica. This pious and charitable man, after having finished the restoration of the neighbourhood of the Basilica (see above, p. 82 f.), erected a memorial tablet, which still exists. The inscription

[1] TEUFFEL-SCHWABE, p. 1264, ed. V. ROSE, Leipzig, 1877.

[2] It is well known that Vulgar Latin, with its absence of law, held a high place in the catacomb inscriptions. Cp. the epitaph of the catacomb of Callistus: GENVARVS PLACVID SE VNITER PONI CVM AMICVM SVVM SIBERINV, *i.e.* "*Ianuario placuit*," &c. (DE ROSSI, *Roma sott.*, I., tav. 27, n. 8).

[3] Text in *Anal. rom.*, I, 153.

testifies as much to the deplorable state of Latin as to the damage done to the church, and repaired by Eusebius. According to the text he himself had restored: *picturas quas in ruinas erat totas*," also "*tectum cum tegulas*," likewise "*marmora quae minus habuit*"; among other things, "*in superiora marmor-avit palatium.*" His "*Alumni*," or assistants, had put up bars to keep out thieves, "*causa fures, cia multa mala facent.*" The inscription contains a number of vernacular architectural terms, which might be sought in vain among standard Latin authors, such as "*speclarum*," "*clostrum*," "*incinus*," "*manganum.*" [1]

Even the solemn dedicatory inscriptions of the Popes in the Basilicas they had erected or restored do not always escape the influence of the bad taste prevailing. They are not, indeed, disfigured by faults of grammar, like the epitaphs of Eugenius and Eusebius, but their phraseology is often so ponderous and so involved as to be scarcely intelligible, particularly when the inscriptions are in verse. For instance, we may still read under the mosaic of Pope Honorius (†638), in the Basilica of St. Agnes on the *Via Nomentana*, six distichs, a chaotic assemblage of sounding words, of which only the general drift can be guessed. In this inscription we have a masterpiece of linguistic impotence and want of taste, The six distichs might well have been condensed into one.[2]

## Last Efforts of Art in Rome and Ravenna

487. The poetical inscription in Sant' Agnese is in entire keeping with the mosaic itself. This, too, proclaims the universal decay, and betrays the incapacity of a period which seeks effect by lavish attention to mere accessories.

In the centre of the mosaic (vol. ii., Ill. 156) stands the Virgin-Martyr, whose burial-place is here. On either side is a Pope, one being Pope Honorius, who restored the church, and the other probably Pope Symmachus, who had previously repaired it. All three figures are rigid and lifeless. Life, indeed, was scarcely any longer to be found in Roman art. The figures are in reality of a Byzantine stamp, and display the defects rather

[1] Text in *Anal. rom.*, 1, 100, 157, with photograph, Pl. 3, n. 4.
[2] Text in DUCHESNE, *Liber pont.*, 1, 325. The verses, amongst other things, compare the colours of the new mosaic to those of the dawn.

than the beauties of that style. Gazing at them we see how the spirit and style of New Rome, since the re-establishment of Byzantine rule, had become acclimatised in the City on the Tiber. It certainly was not the art of the church of St. Sophia in Constantinople which was now beginning to hold sway in Rome, but merely a debased imitation. The figures are Byzantine, but as devoid of life as the high-sounding inscription is of sense.

The figure of the Saint in particular agrees not at all with the traditional picture of this girl-martyr. She is here depicted as an elderly person, lean, formal, and decked out in a superfluity of precious robes and pearls. The customary crown is being brought down to her by a hand from above, and at her feet are the flames and sword, *i.e.* the symbols of her martyrdom as described by the tradition then current.[1]

488. Another mosaic in St. Lawrence's Basilica, completed not long before, also exhibits, though not to such a degree, the stiffness and poverty of form usual in Rome during the Byzantine period. It may have been executed in the sixth century, under Pope Pelagius II., who restored the church. Christ appears in the centre, enthroned upon the orb; on His right stands Peter with a cross, Lawrence the deacon also with a cross, and Pope Pelagius II. as the founder. On His left is Paul, Stephen the deacon, and Hippolytus the martyr, once laid to rest in the adjoining cemetery. The whole group is framed on both sides by the traditional representation of the cities of Jerusalem and Bethlehem. The influence of debased Byzantinism is particularly observable in the figure of Christ. Our Lord's stern, ascetic face puts us in mind of the features common among Eastern monks. A few reminiscences of the traditional art of Rome nevertheless linger in this work, and it has a value of its own on account of its transitional character.[2]

[1] Coloured illustration in DE ROSSI, *Musaici delle chiese di Roma*, sec. vii., and (less successfully) in GARRUCCI, Pl. 274, and FONTANA, *Chiese di Roma*, 6, Pl. 8.

[2] DE ROSSI, *Musaici*, sec. vi. GARRUCCI, Pl. 271. FONTANA, 6, Pl. 22. The inscription of the mosaic is in my *Anal. rom.*, I, 119. Regarding the mosaic, Vitet (*Journal des savants*, June 1863, p. 351) opines that while the portrait of Christ is indeed touched with Byzantine sternness and asceticism, the figures of the saints are neither too stiff nor too tall, but still retain the marks of ancient Roman art. De Rossi adds: "Sarebbe questo adunque un monumento ed un esemplare della transizione dai tipi dell' arte cristiana classica a quelli della bizantina."

Ill. 215.—Marble Entablature above Constantine's Columns in San Lorenzo.

(Erected in the time of Pelagius II.)

Ill. 216.—A, Capital Sculptured under Pelagius II. in San Lorenzo. B, C, Capitals of the Time of Theodoric at San Martino ai Monti.

A study of plastic art towards the close of the sixth century will serve to emphasise the steady decline of general culture.

The decay of this art, even more strikingly than that of learning, history, poetry, and language, showed that it was hopeless to await any return to the old-world rules. New problems had to be solved, new forces set in motion. The new human world in process of formation was less anxious than the old for the gifts of outward culture, and was content with a much more elementary education. It behoved man to think more of the immediate remedies for spiritual destitution and for earthly suffering than of æsthetic satisfaction. Deep learning was of little use to rough, untutored minds, and before all else it was necessary to mitigate the distress beneath which the masses groaned. Style and melodious language might well be neglected when the pressing task was to save morality and virtue from extinction in the older race and to implant them amongst the half-savage newcomers.

To observe the last efforts of plastic art we must betake ourselves to the Basilica of St. Lawrence on the *Via Tiburtina*, and examine the other works of Pelagius II. Besides the mosaic already described, the restoration of the second church, *viz.* of that lying to the rear and containing some notable sculpture, was due to this Pope.

During the fifth century Roman sculpture could still rise to the artistic perfection and grandeur seen on the carved doors of Sta. Sabina and on so many of the sarcophagi. In the sixth century it is otherwise; sculptured figures are no longer produced, and even decorative sculpture has deteriorated and been reduced to borrowing beautiful fragments of antiquity, as we may see for ourselves in San Lorenzo.

Under Pelagius II. the broad frieze of ancient marble was placed above the fine columns of the lower Constantinian building (Ill. 215).[1] This in turn supports the row of smaller pillars forming the gallery, which was added at that time above the side-aisles

[1] From LANCIANI, *Pagan and Christian Rome*, p. 135. The columns of Constantine's edifice, with capitals, all alike of the Corinthian order, seem to rise from the depths, being partly concealed by the mediæval marble seats for the choir. The last column on the right supports a richly worked ancient capital, which, like that facing it on the other side of the nave, was added by Pelagius II. The marble parapet of the gallery is modern work. The decline of art in the age of Pelagius II. is evinced by the coarseness of the imposts which bear the arches no less than by the arrangement of the entablature below.

and the porch to the old Basilica. The ancient, richly-decorated fragments used in this restoration were put together haphazard, and with no regard for harmony. No sculptor ventured to try his hand at arranging the different parts and completing what was deficient. Rome seems to have no longer possessed a master capable of performing even so light a task.[1]

The columns standing nearest to the mosaic of Pelagius II. were most probably also added by this Pope, and furnished with the grand classical capitals ornamented with martial emblems

Ill. 217.—Plinth of two Columns erected by Pelagius II. in San Lorenzo.

Sketched by Mazzanti.

which contrast so sadly with the real work of the sixth-century sculptors. The only parts belonging to the latter are the Byzantine widely-projecting imposts with Greek crosses on the Corinthian pillars of the gallery; two capitals in the Corinthian style of Byzantium (Ill. 216, A) after the same pattern as some found at Ravenna, Parenzo, and Venice, and finally the rude ornaments in relief upon four pillar bases. One of these bases merely shows the cross between two rosettes (Ill. 217); the others have rosettes, a little foliage, figures of doves, crosses of the stereotyped form, and, in two cases, the alpha and omega

[1] Cattaneo, *L' architettura in Italia prima del secolo VI. al mille circa*, p. 39: "Nella sua goffaggine [la trabeazione di S. Lorenzo] accusa la povertà e rozzezza di quel tempo," &c.

beneath the arms of the cross. These were sufficient to exhaust the sculptor's ingenuity.[1]

489. Everything here recalls the poverty of the decoration on the tomb of Cassius at Narni and on the altar-tomb of St. Victor at Otricoli, near Rome, two monuments to be dealt with presently which belong to the same century, and of which the artists were likewise unable to figure anything more elaborate than a cross and a few wretched lambs.

No other sculptures dating from the Byzantine portion of the sixth century are known in Rome or the neighbourhood, excepting the simple work on the bridge of Narses over the Anio, and a few equally insignificant ornaments in the church of the Apostles and in the Basilica of St. Peter. The work in San Martino ai Monti (Ill. 216, B, C) and in San Clemente belongs to the Ostrogothic period. To the latter church John II. bequeathed the handsome choir-screen bearing his monogram, a work in which Byzantine influence is already apparent.[2]

After the close of the sixth century, sculpture, even of the rudest description, becomes increasingly scanty in Rome. The art, such as it was, did not however die out entirely, nor sink as low as in other parts of Italy. Owing to the constant demands made by the numerous huge churches of Rome, the sculptor's art necessarily retained some spark of life in this rallying-point of religious worship.

The things on which the chisel was chiefly used were choir-screens and parapets (*transennae*, *plutei*), like those in San Clemente. But how great is the difference between such work and that of the previous ages. The figures lack individuality and are no longer in high relief; refinement and truth to nature have alike disappeared, and everything is dull, confused, faint, and feeble. Acanthus leaves are no longer found save on

[1] Mazzanti, *La scultura ornamentale* (*Archivio storico dell' arte*, 1896, p. 52), mentions some pieces of sculpture in the monastery of S. Lorenzo which may be ascribed to the time of Pelagius II. Our Ill. 216 is taken from Mazzanti, l.c., p. 48. The two bases alluded to first in our text are beneath the lower columns, of which the capitals do not match the others. The remaining bases are below the columns of the gallery, above the ancient porch, where Pius IX. now lies buried.

[2] For the bridge of Narses, see above, Ill. 175. The architectural remains from the church of the (XII.) Apostles are now built into the atrium. See illustrations of the fragments from St. Peter's in MAZZANTI, p. 52. The capitals from Soracte there shown, and ascribed to Gregory the Great, cannot be proved to belong to him. On John II., see present work, vol. ii. p. 274, and Ill. 155.

Corinthian capitals, and though the latter show a certain affinity with the Byzantine manner, they do not adopt its exuberant decoration, but lag behind the fanciful Eastern designs.

490. How quickly and to what a depth sculpture sank outside Rome is particularly evident at Ravenna. There, under Gothic rule, new churches were adorned with good decorative work, and sarcophagi continued to be tastefully carved even when in Rome the art had already declined. In the Cathedral of Ravenna the pulpit or ambo of Bishop Agnellus (*ca.* 560) stands as a proof that, at about the middle of the sixth century, the sculptors there had not entirely lost their inspiration. In the following years and in the seventh century, it becomes, however, evident that the Byzantines, dwelling in a city incessantly threatened by the Lombards, had to devote their attention to things other than sculpture.

The ambo bearing the date 597 in SS. Giovanni e Paolo is already barbaric in character, nor is that ambo much better of which a portion is preserved in the Palazzo Rasponi at Ravenna. The figures of animals enclosed in small squares, with which it is adorned, are a slavish and awkward imitation of the simple carvings on the ambo of Agnellus at the Cathedral. Whereas the figures on the latter work are at least clearly outlined, those on the ambo of SS. Giovanni e Paolo betray utter ignorance of what a relief should be, and even the draughtsmanship is at fault. No one would be able to distinguish the worthy artist's lamb from the stag, were not the latter provided with a pair of antlers, while the peacock would be exactly like the dove, did it not bear a crest upon its head. Eyes, wings, and feathers are shown by simple strokes. Rosettes, foliage, and beading vie with one another in poverty of conception, and, finally, what can be said of the mannikins in the upper corners, two crippled figures of Orantes, representing SS. John and Paul?[1]

It is indeed a mournful work. These horrid likenesses of the two martyrs are the last representations of the human form in that period of Italian sculpture. Even in Rome itself, the metropolis of ancient art, the poor stone-masons were not equal to portraying a human being, and throughout the seventh century they could produce nothing better than a few clumsy animal figures.

[1] For the ambo in SS. Giovanni e Paolo, see CATTANEO, p. 19.

491. One asks oneself with anxiety, how low culture is to sink in Italy, its own classic home?

After the collapse of art and learning, after the wreck of ancient culture, amidst barbarian inroads and increasing moral depravity, who is to prevent mankind from rushing headlong into the abyss? The answer comes from those very churches which contain the sparse, poverty-stricken memorials of that age of decay. The Church is the sanctuary in which civilisation will be saved for the nations. Amidst all the onslaughts of savagery, the Church, divinely founded on the Rock, safeguards for mankind their truest and most precious treasures. Even in the most awful period of Western history, she teaches her children to believe in higher things and to hope for a more enduring wealth. By affectionate admonition and severe penance she held them back from following their evil desires. Slowly and patiently she built up a new society of which God's worship formed the link and power. This new society for a long while was nourished intellectually with what remained of antiquity; then, gradually, it developed a culture of its own, without however ceasing to admire and even to imitate the ancient patterns; finally came the revival and resurrection of classicism, which, with the new strength borrowed from Christianity, was responsible for new ages of culture.

Whatever was saved amidst the universal upheaval, was saved by the Church, and whatever was destroyed, was certainly not destroyed by her, but by the misfortunes which overwhelmed the world at a time when the older civilisation and the State had been weakened to such an extent as to be powerless either to resist the triumphant barbarians, or to dispel their ignorance.

Gaston Boissier, one of the most respected members of the French Academy, who devoted his life to the study of the last period of Roman civilisation, says: "The Church, far from being a source of injury to the Empire and its culture, laid her saving hand on every element of ancient civilisation in which life was not already extinct. Nothing could be in more flagrant contradiction with history [than the statement that the Church destroyed ancient literature]. To support such a view is to prove one's ignorance of the history of Latin literature under the Empire." When the West was inundated by floods of barbarians, the Church gave signal proof of her strength. Hers was the only harbour in

which the world could take refuge. In all her benevolence, too, the Church never ceased to be guided by a grand and far-reaching spiritual plan. This plan and the thought of things eternal she reckoned of more importance than any vain effort to maintain the old Imperial system, or to devote herself too exclusively to the temporal welfare and worldly culture of her children. For this, who could blame her? As a matter of fact, such were the circumstances that "her advantage coincided with the advantage of humanity, and, in serving her own peculiar cause, she, at the same time, served that of mankind." These words come from a scholar whose knowledge of the period is undoubted, and whose opinion is certainly not biassed in favour of the Church either of the past or of the present.[1]

[1] BOISSIER, *La fin du paganisme*, 2, pp. 376, 425 f., and book 6, ch. 3. The author deals at great length with the controversy existing even in the time of the Fathers as to whether the Church was the cause of the military and economic decline of the Empire. Against the statement that Christianity had robbed the army of its strength, he quotes, for instance, St. Augustine's rejoinder, *viz.* that the Founder of the Church was in no wise opposed to the profession of arms or to just warfare. Christianity itself chose King David as the model of a valiant soldier (2, 370 ff., from AUGUSTINE, *Epist.*, 135, 138, 189; *De civ. Dei*, 1, 21, 26). As for the economic decline of the Empire, Boissier says: "Les maladies cachées qui devaient perdre l'empire, ont précédé de beaucoup la victoire du christianisme. Il a eu le malheur d'hériter d'une situation fort compromise," &c. (2, p. 359).

## CHAPTER IV

### BISHOPS AND CLERGY

492. At the consecration of Bishops in Rome, the Pope, according to the earliest Sacramentaries we know, was wont to deliver a number of touching admonitory addresses. The words spoken on so solemn an occasion cannot fail to have sunk deeply into the hearts of the new pastors. Such admonitions might well be considered as golden rules for the direction of the Church's shepherds at a time when their zeal was more than ever called for, owing to the overthrow of social order and the incessant, dangerous disturbance of the public peace.

"May the power of the Holy Ghost," said the successor of Peter, "inspire the Bishops in their inner life and outward action. May there abide in them the power of Faith, the purity of Love, and a sincere will to preserve the peace. Yea, may their feet hasten to carry tidings of peace to the world and bring to it the blessings of Heaven. Grant, O Lord, that they may become instruments of reconciliation in word and deed and wondrous signs. May they use the power Thou hast bestowed on them, not for their own sakes but for edification. . . . May they rule as faithful servants, as wise guides, whom Thou hast set over Thy family to give them meat in due season, and to help all on the way to perfection. May they labour unremittingly, fervent in spirit, hating pride and loving truth. May they never prove false to truth either through vain fear or cowardly sloth. May they never turn light into darkness, or darkness into light, but ever call evil evil, and goodness good. Thou, O Lord, be their dignity, their power, and their strength." [1]

### Some Prominent Italian Bishops

493. As an instance of one who, endowed with strength from on high, carried these words into effect, Ennodius placed before

[1] *Sacramentarium Gelasianum*, l. 1, n. 99. Cp. *Sacram. Leonianum*, Decemb., n. 14.

Bishops and their flocks the pattern of St. Epiphanius of Pavia. To him Ennodius devoted an affectionate biography, which brilliantly describes a Bishop's aim and duty in the midst of a troubled world. The biography, for all its rhetoric, is perfectly historical, as the author was intimately acquainted with Epiphanius, whom he succeeded in the See of Pavia.[1]

He describes how Epiphanius, in the midst of the prevailing distress, entirely sacrificed himself for his flock; how he dauntlessly battled with the nobles for truth, right, and peace, whilst on the poor, for whom alone he seemed to care, he was ever ready to bestow spiritual consolation and temporal relief. He was even wont to play the beggar when seeking funds for the redemption of prisoners.

When there arose a fear that Ricimer had secretly allied himself with the German tribes beyond the Alps against the Emperor Athemius, the brave and God-fearing pastor was implored to intervene and avert the threatened war. His answer was, "I shall not be false to the affection I owe to my country," and his earnest advice induced Ricimer to make peace with the Emperor. The reconciliation, for which the Bishop paved the way, for a while brought peace to the world.[2]

Likewise, for the sake of the poor, Epiphanius visited the Gothic King Theodoric to second the petition of the Roman population for the revocation of certain oppressive edicts. The people, says Ennodius, turned to the Bishop as to a physician skilled in the art of healing the wounds of the age, and he hesitated not to hasten to the sovereign with Lawrence, Bishop of Milan, and to lay before him the grievances of his subjects.[3]

Encouraged by such examples, many other Bishops likewise made use of the high authority with which they were invested to support the people, both spiritually and temporally. In Italy, in the midst of the fearful vicissitudes of war, and the unsettlement of public affairs, they formed a power which could not be shaken, and to which men in search of help never ceased

[1] *Vita beatissimi viri Epiphanii episcopi Ticinensis ecclesiae* (*P.L.*, LXIII., 209; ed. VOGEL, *Mon. Germ. hist.*, *Auctt. antiq.*, t. 7).

[2] "*Affectum, quem debeo patriae, non negabo*" (*P.L.*, LXIII., 215). Such are the Saint's words, who, like most of the other Latin bishops, could combine Roman patriotism with the religious duties of his state.

[3] "*Manu medica publicis consueverat subvenire vulneribus*" (*P.L.*, LXIII., 226).

to turn. Especially those Bishops were sought after who enjoyed a reputation for unselfishness and priestly holiness.

In Central Italy the most noted Bishops of the period were — Marcellinus of Ancona, Cerbonius of Populonia, Probus of Reate, Boniface and Redemptus of Ferentum, Fulgentius of Ocricolum, Cassius of Narnia, Herculanus of Perusium, and Fortunatus of Tudertum. All these belonged to the Roman Province, and had therefore been consecrated by the Pope in Rome. Amidst the greatest hardships they laboured like true Apostles, thanks to the spirit they had imbibed at the Confession of St. Peter.[1]

So highly was the last-named, Fortunatus of Tudertum, revered by his flock on account of his holy life, that in their misfortunes they were wont naïvely to ask of him miracles. "We know," they would cry, "that thou followest in the footsteps of the Apostles; that thou cleansest lepers and givest light to the blind, wherefore help us too!" When the Goths quartered in his episcopal city gave no heed to the Saint's warnings, and refused to amend their evil ways, they were compelled to acknowledge at their expense the power of his prayer.[2]

Fulgentius, Bishop of Ocricolum, by his influence and Heaven's intervention in his behalf, cowed a savage band of Gothic soldiers who threatened him. So great was his holiness and such were the marvellous things told of him, that even savage King Totila was overawed. The King's cruel heart, says our authority, was turned, and he conceived great veneration for the saintly man.[3]

The town of Ocricolum, now Otricoli, lies on the ancient Flaminian Way.

## The Bishropics on the Via Flaminia and their Occupants

494. After the Flaminian Way had left the City at the spot already described, and had passed St. Valentine's church, crossing the Tiber at the Milvian Bridge, it proceeded to ascend the river. After having left Mount Soracte on the right, it recrossed the Tiber to the north of the present Ponte Felice by a bridge

[1] Populonia is destroyed, but the See remains in that of Massa Maritima. Ferentum, near Viterbo, has also passed away. Ocricolum is now Otricoli; Narnia is Narni; Perusium, Perugia; Tudertum, Todi.

[2] GREG. M., *Dial.* 1, c. 10: "*Scimus quod apostolorum vitam tenes, leprosos mundas, caecos illuminas*," &c.

[3] GREG. M., *Dial.* 3, c. 12: "*Totilae mens effera ad magnam eius reverentiam conversa est.*"

belonging to classic times, of which the ruins are now called by the people the "piers of Augustus." It then went up the hill on the left bank, where Ocricolum sat enthroned upon a breezy height, and, continuing its way to the north, it reached the tributary of the Tiber called the Nar—the present Nera—and the rocky townlet of Narnia. This, like Ocricolum, was a point of strategical importance, as it held the key to the road connecting Rome with the north of Italy and the country of Ravenna. The *Via Flaminia*, after this, passed by Interamnia, Spoletium, Fulginium, Nuceria, crossed the Apennines, and touching Calles, Intercisa, Forum Sempronii and Ad Octavum, reached the Adriatic at Fanum Fortunæ.[1]

The road was studded with episcopal cities of considerable importance, as the very names show.

On these historic sites, amidst the grand remains of heathenism, we find many Christian monuments, witnesses of the religious culture and godliness of earliest times, whilst many names of venerated martyrs mark, along the Flaminian Way, the path of the Roman legions and of the first preachers of the Gospel.

In the matter of classical remains even so small a town as Ocricolum, during the excavation carried out under Pius VI., yielded the colossal head of Jupiter, now in the Vatican Museum, the finest of all known representations of the god, the priceless, coloured, tesselated pavement now in the same Museum, besides other treasures of art. The little town still retains its ancient theatre and baths. Among its Christian antiquities is the remarkable memorial erected by Bishop Fulgentius in honour of Victor the martyr. This is part of a marble altar, in which Fulgentius placed the body of the martyr, after translating it from its original burial-place. On it we may still read the faulty old inscription ("*super altarem*," &c.), and see the debased art of the sixth century in the unfortunate lambs standing on either side of a cross. At Ocricolum likewise a sepulchral crypt, still in existence, sheltered the bodies of St. Medicus and other martyrs.[2]

[1] The present names, enumerated as they stand in the text above, are: Terni, Spoleto, Foligno, Nocera Umbra, Cagli, Furlo (the famous rock-gallery in the Eastern Apennines), Fossombrone, Calcinelli, and Fano. On the Flaminian Way, see TOMASSETTI, *La Via Flaminia*.

[2] On the Pagan antiquities, see GUARDABASSI, *Indice-Guida dei monumenti dell' Umbria*, 160 ff. For the altar, GARRUCCI, Pl. 422, n. 3 (Illustration). St. Medicus, in DE ROSSI, *Bull. arch. crist.*, 1871, p. 83; 1880, p. 115 ff. BOLDETTI, *Osservazioni sui cimiteri*, p. 587.

The little town of Narnia, on the Flaminian Way, besides the Roman antiquities in its vicinity, has, in its cathedral, the narrow sepulchre of St. Juvenal, its one-time Bishop, with his ancient sarcophagus, and the burial-place of Cassius, a still more celebrated occupant of this See.

495. Cassius of Narnia adorned the See of Ocricolum at the time of the Gothic wars. He was one of those Bishops sent forth by Rome, who, during the period of Italy's distress, realised the Church's ideal of the pastoral office. He bestowed in charity everything he possessed. He daily celebrated with tears the

Ill. 218.—Tombstone of St. Cassius, Bishop of Narni.

Holy Sacrifice at the tomb of St. Juvenal, his exemplary predecessor. Gregory the Great tells how a sword-bearer (*spatharius*) of King Totila was attacked by an evil spirit in the camp at Narnia, and was exorcised by the prayer of Cassius, upon which Totila was so moved that he cast himself on his knees before the saint. Cassius was also frequently vouchsafed an insight into the future. It having been revealed to him that he would die on the feast of SS. Peter and Paul, fear caused him to cease his previous custom of betaking himself on that day to the Apostles' Tombs in Rome. He did not, however, succeed thereby in escaping death. Pope Gregory, in a sermon delivered in the church of St. Sebastian on the Appian Way, showed how what had been

foretold was fulfilled on the actual day many years later, after Cassius "had offered the sacrifice of the Mass," not in Rome, but in the oratory of his own *episcopium* at Narnia, and "had given our Lord's Body to the communicants and the kiss of peace to all." [1]

The Bishop's tombstone, which is of great archæological interest, may be seen outside his chapel in the cathedral of the city (Ill. 218). It gives the date of burial as A.D. 558, "*pridie Kalendas Iulii*," *i.e.* June 30, the day after the Feast of the Apostles. Cassius, in the first part of the epitaph, which he himself composed, states that he, "an unworthy prelate raised by the grace of Christ," rests here, whilst in front of his tomb lies Fausta, his "sweetest consort in life." He begs visitors to pray for him and for her, his pious spouse. He had ceased to cohabit with Fausta when promoted to higher orders, but in death the two were reunited. The slab bears exactly the same ornaments as those on the altar remains at Ocricolum, *i.e.* a cross between two lambs, all worked in relief, whilst below, at the lower edge, it displays the whole contemporary alphabet just as we find it occasionally on other Christian sepulchres, where it is always used with a mystic meaning.[2]

## Bishops outside Italy

496. Beyond the Italian frontiers the Catholic episcopate was also represented by many holy men, who laboured in the spirit of Rome for the cause of morality and peace, and personally were patterns of Christian virtue and self-denial.

Towards the close of the fifth and the beginning of the sixth century, Avitus, the famous Bishop of Vienne, a member of a senatorial family from the country of the Arverni (Auvergne), with a broad mind and a large heart, prepared the way for Christian civilisation among the new lords of what was yet a Roman

[1] *Homil.* 37, n. 9. Cp. *Dial.* 3, c. 6; 4, c. 56.

[2] Our Ill. 218 is from GARRUCCI, Pl. 393, 6, but we have added the alphabet from EROLI, *Miscell. stor. Narnese*, 1 (1858), 280. De Rossi, when dealing with the use of the alphabet (*Bull. arch. crist.*, 1881, p. 140 ff.), fails to mention this epitaph. The epitaph of St. Cassius consists of six hexameters, after which comes an extra line with the date, added, of course, after the Bishop's death. The sarcophagus considered to have once contained St. Juvenal, is certainly in ancient style. On it I failed to find any inscription. On the other hand, inside the crypt I noticed the original epitaph of another bishop, *viz.* Pancras or Pancratius, dated from the Consulship of Albinus Junior. The latter is in EROLI, l.c. Cp. E. WÜSCHER BECCHI, *Das Oratorium des hl. Cassius und das Grab des hl. Juvenal in Narni* (*Röm. Quartalschr.*, 1905, p. 42 ff.).

dependency. Cæsarius of Arles, likewise, by the power of his word and example, about this same time increased among the Franks the respect in which religion was held (see present work, vol. ii. p. 292 ff.). Others who worked for the same end as good Bishops and harbingers of civilisation among the Franks were Remigius of Remi, Medardus of Noviomum, Gregory of Lingones, Nicetius of Treviri, Lupus of Lugdunum, Leo of Senones, Eleutherius and Aunacharius of Antissiodorum, Germanus of Parisii, Prætextatus of Rothomagum, Maglorius of Dola, Euphronius of Turones, and his successor, Gregory, the historian of the Franks.[1]

The last-mentioned, Gregory of Tours, died in 594, revered throughout all Gaul, after having been the adviser and supporter of King Childebert in the most important affairs of State. Aunacharius, Bishop of Antissiodorum, who died, after a long pontificate, at the beginning of the seventh century, also exercised great influence at the Frankish Court, and made use of it for the good of the Church and people.[2]

The list of such exemplary Gallic Bishops might easily be lengthened. We shall, however, have occasion to see later on that there were also many—far too many—prelates who were unequal to their task. Episcopal elections were particularly subject to State interference, in consequence of which unworthy men, with the support of ambitious sovereigns, found it comparatively easy to smuggle themselves into the sanctuary. Moreover, the numerous temporal cares which Bishops were necessarily obliged to assume, both in Italy and elsewhere, often distracted the Church's pastors from their real duty. On them alone, or their representatives, it often fell to see to the defence of their city, to care for the poor, to ransom captives, and even to insure the maintenance of public order, not to mention education and instruction, for which they were responsible. It is no wonder that under such circumstances they were sometimes deficient in the episcopal spirit.

Not all Bishops could so entirely rise superior to external affairs as the saintly Bishop Felix of Namnetes (Nantes), who was famous as a true pastor, as an educator, and as a builder in

[1] The names in the order of the text are: Rheims, Noyon, Langres, Trier or Treves, Lyons, Sens, Auxerre, Paris, Rouen, Dol, and Tours.

[2] Ebert, in his *Gesch. der Lit. des Abendl.*, 1, 567, has high praise for Gregory of Tours.

every sense of the word. He not only made himself a name by erecting ecclesiastical structures, but, when the people's needs required it, was willing to undertake the construction of secular buildings. Thus, for instance, as no architect was to be found, he himself erected embankments alongside a river which often overflowed, reclaiming for agricultural purposes a tract which hitherto had been barren. The poet Fortunatus describes this great undertaking in a manner which shows that it continued the grand traditions of old Roman architecture.[1]

Among the Suevi in Spain, St. Martin, Abbot and Bishop of Dumium, near Bracara (Braga), laboured energetically to promote Christian morality and culture. Among the Visigoths of Spain, Leander, Bishop of Hispalis (Sevilla), and scion of a Roman family, was the greatest of the Bishops who played a prominent part in the rise of Visigothic civilisation.

To many a Bishop whose sphere lay among the newly-founded Germanic kingdoms, we could have applied the description given by Paulinus of Nola, at a rather earlier period, of St. Niceta in Dacia. In poetic language he shows us this apostolic man preaching amidst the bitter cold of the countries bordering the Danube, melting frozen hearts by his doctrine and example, and, by his gentleness and firmness, turning the robbers' mountain fastnesses into abodes of peace-bringing monks. The barbarians were civilised by him; they learned to esteem good morals and domestic life, and the once silent forests resounded with the praises of Christ intoned "by Roman breasts," says Paulinus, for the Dacians had made their peace with Rome on receiving from it the priceless gift of civilisation.[2]

The Catholic Bishops, trained as they were under Roman influences, and representing as they did Roman civilisation among the barbarians, were indeed chiefly responsible for the bridging of the gulf which had divided the Latins and the barbarians.

In those years we hear much less of the scholarship of Bishops

[1] FORTUNATUS, *Carm.*, l. 3, n. 10. *Mon. Germ. hist. Auctt. ant.*, 4, p. 62 f.
[2] *Carm.* 17, *ad Nicetam*, vers. 261 ff.; *P.L.*, LXI., 488:

> "*Orbis in muta regione per te*
> *Barbari discunt resonare Christum*
> *Corde romano, placidamque casti*
> *Vivere pacem.*"

Cp. the *Vita S. Honorati*, c. 3, on the civilising influence on the barbarians of the monks of Lerins.

and clergy than of their efforts to promote the spiritual and bodily welfare of those confided to their care. The education of the clergy, especially in Italy, was the reverse of ambitious. As intellectual culture declined in consequence of the invasions, and as one storm followed the other, and the chances of a renascence of peaceful learning became more and more remote, Bishops and clergy were compelled to confide in the supernatural power of the Gospel, in the force of simple discourses intelligible to all, and in the example of sound virtue.

## Bible-Study: Clerical Labourers

497. The clergy were above all trained by the Holy Scriptures, of which the living, life-bringing Word never failed in the period of worldly decay. Godliness and acquaintance with the Bible had to compensate for the learning which candidates for ordination lacked.

Pope Pelagius I. once declared, in a case where the ordination of a deacon to a bishopric in the province of the Roman Church was under discussion, that, in consequence of the times, the Church's law could no longer be followed to the letter, for, not only were men wanting in merit, but there was actually a scarcity of men. In another case, he allowed the Bishop of Centumcellæ to proceed with the ordination of a priest, a deacon, and a subdeacon, provided the Bishop was satisfied as to their good character and freedom from canonical impediments. The candidates had been presented by the Imperial troops quartered near Centumcellæ to minister to their spiritual wants, and may quite possibly have been chosen from the ranks; at any rate we hear not a word of their having prepared themselves for ordination by any course of study. Here, as elsewhere, Pelagius ever insists on one condition, minus which the clergy would lose its influence, *viz.* that those chosen to hold high appointments in the Church must be "firmly rooted in religion, of good conduct, and ready to fight the Church's foes."[1]

[1] Pelagius I. (in MANSI, 9, 906, 909; JAFFÉ-KALTENBR., n. 1006) deplores the "*defectus nostrorum temporum, quibus non solum merita sed corpora ipsa hominum defecerunt.*" His letter to the Bishop of Centumcellæ, MANSI, 9, 736; JAFFÉ-KALTENBR., n. 1002. Cp. *Neues Archiv*, 5 (1880), 548, n. 30, where, however, the Regest is not clear. Pelagius I., on the requisite character, "*fixus in religione et bonus in moribus et in resistendo adversariis efficax.*" To Agnellus, Bishop of Ravenna, JAFFÉ-KALTENBR., n. 1009. *Collect. Brit. ep.*, 37.

At a somewhat later date, among the requisites demanded of the candidate to a bishopric was an accurate knowledge of the Psalms. Any one not knowing the Psalms by heart was refused consecration. In doubtful cases the candidate was to undergo an examination, that it might be ascertained how many Psalms he had failed to learn by rote.[1]

In the West the Council of Toledo in 653, by special decree, made obligatory on the clergy the committal to memory of the Psalms, and in the East the Second Council of Nicæa in 787 imposed it as a condition for elevation to the episcopate.[2]

Such legislation is partly explained by the fact that in the Church's canonical hours the Psalms were usually chanted or said from memory, and formed the main part of the official prayers recited by clergy and monks. Any one not setting due value on the Psalms, or neglecting to learn them, was presumed to have no love for the Church's services or for Holy Scripture.

498. He who will preach the Word of God, said one of the greatest men of that period, must take his arguments from the pages of Holy Writ, and rely upon God's authority as his best support. Christ is the Door, as He Himself taught, but the Old and the New Testaments are two steps by which we reach the Door. How great was his esteem for the Scriptures is apparent from the following words of the same author: "The Holy Ghost must be deemed the inspirer of this book [he is speaking particularly of the Book of Job] for He Himself may be considered the writer of all He dictated. Holy Writ is verily an epistle of the Almighty to His creatures. It is as bread, strengthening the soul for good work. Its study refreshes the mind, gives patience to the soul, enlightens us with truth, and moves us to tears of penitence." What Gregory the Great expressed in such pregnant words was fully acknowledged by the Middle Ages, of which he was the revered master. Far from despising the Bible, the best and finest minds amongst the clergy, both secular and regular, had for Holy Writ the same esteem as Gregory.[3]

[1] GREGOR. M., *Registrum*, 5, n. 51 (Maur., 5, n. 48); 14, n. 11: "*de rustico diacono, quantos psalmos minus teneat, perscrutandum est.*"

[2] *Conc. Tolet.*, can. 8; MANSI, 10, 1206. *Conc. Nicaen. II.*, can. 2; MANSI, 13, 748.

[3] GREGOR. M., *Moral.*, 18, c. 26, n. 39: "*causarum origines a sacris paginis sumat,*" &c. *In Ez.*, l. 2, *hom.* 3, n. 1 ff., on the steps to the door. *Praef. ad Moral.*, n. 2: "*Auctor libri* (*Iob*) *Spiritus Sanctus fideliter credatur. Ipse igitur haec scripsit qui scribenda dictavit,*" &c. *Registrum*, 5, n. 46 (4, n. 31), *ad Theodorum medicum*: "*Quid*

The narratives and teachings of Holy Writ were so generally known towards the end of the early Christian period, that writers like Arator, for instance, in his poetical works, took it for granted that their readers were conversant with the whole Bible, and never paused to explain their own allusions to stories or passages from it. The poems of Sedulius, with their Scriptural allusions, could not be understood save by one well acquainted with the Gospels.

Educated people of the world were also wont to prefer the reading of Scripture, seeking in it spiritual recreation and refreshment. A well-known physician at the Byzantine Court was exhorted by Pope Gregory to acquire this habit, as also were two ladies of high rank, in the latter case that they might learn how to conduct themselves in married life, and how to regulate their homes in a Christian manner.[1]

In Rome there lived a pious mendicant, named Servulus, well known to all who attended the Basilica of St. Clement, as he was accustomed to lie upon his sick-bed in the atrium begging alms of those who entered. With the money given him he had bought codices of the Holy Scriptures, in the contents of which he was well versed, as, at his wish, they were constantly being read aloud to him.[2]

In the province of Valeria, not far from Rome, Equitius, the saintly founder of a monastery, went to and fro upon his mule, preaching everywhere. To his belt on either side were fitted leathern pockets, in which he carried the Scriptures, for he was accustomed to entertain his hearers wherever he went with stories from Holy Writ. It is on record how, when he was Abbot, he would interrupt his reading, in order to make himself useful on the hayfield or at other agricultural pursuits, leaving at home such of his monks as were skilled in calligraphy (*antiquarii*), to increase the number of books, particularly of copies of the Holy Scriptures.[3]

This picture of simple, uncultured Equitius, an Abbot who enjoyed the reputation of working miracles, is typical of those times. Profound studies have been displaced by conscientious,

*est scriptura sacra, nisi quaedam epistola omnipotentis Dei ad creaturam suam?*" *Moral.*, 15, c. 13, n. 16: "*panis.*" *In Ez.*, l. 1, *hom.* 7, n. 11 ff.: "*ad poenitentiae lamenta compungit,*" &c.

[1] GREG. M., *Epist. ad Theodorum medicum* and *Registrum*, 11, n. 59 (11, n. 78), *ad Barbaram et Antoninam* (*filias Venantii patricii*).

[2] GREGOR. M., *Dial.* 4, c. 14.

[3] GREGOR. M., *Dial.* 1, c. 4: "*super semetipsum sacros codices in pelliceis sacculis missos dextro laevoque portabat latere.*" Ibid.: "*antiquarii scribentes.*"

devout reading of the sacred books, and the luxury and leisure of Pagan life by rough, self-sacrificing work, and the tedious copying of literary treasures.

499. Among the clergy manual labour was quite customary, and still more so was this the case among the monks. The clergy lived amongst the poor, sharing their toil, while the monasteries were not only refuges for the indigent in distress, but also centres of work and industry, setting an example to all to bestir themselves to overcome nature and the desolation which war had brought upon the country; in this wise they were a priceless instrument for improving what was threatening to perish entirely. When the populace saw with their own eyes how, in the province of Valeria, Severus, the priest, whom they revered for his holiness and about whom we are told in Gregory's Dialogues, condescended to plant the vineyards, or how Quadragesimus, the subdeacon, pastured his flocks of sheep, they could not fail to learn a lesson and to esteem the more the humble toil of the countryman.[1]

Paganism, Roman and Greek, in its prejudice, had cherished a mistaken contempt for work.

In heathen times people had left agricultural work, the crafts, and personal service to despised slaves, as occupations unworthy of a free citizen. Aristotle held that intellectual superiority and nobility of mind were incompatible with personal labour, while Cicero says: "All workmen are engaged in what is sordid and it is useless to seek for nobility in a workshop."[2]

When, however, our Divine Saviour during the long years He spent at Nazareth had set an example of work; when the Apostles and Saints had, by word and deed, raised manual labour to its original dignity in the world, Christianity hallowed and united the family by the bond of ready toil; it comforted and lauded the poorer classes, who made their living by it, and it invited those of higher station to contend in honourable rivalry with their less fortunate brethren. In this manner it pointed out the way to an improved civilisation. In devoting themselves to manual labour the clergy were, therefore, acting partly from necessity and partly from voluntary devotion, seeking thereby to bring into honour

[1] The priest Severus, GREG. M., *Dial.* 1, c. 12. The subdeacon Quadragesimus, ibid., 3, c. 17.

[2] ARIST., *Polit.*, 6, c. 2 (4), n. 7. CICERO, *De officiis*, 1, c. 42: "*Opifices omnes in sordida arte versantur; nec enim quidquam ingenuum potest habere officina.*"

among their contemporaries the principles of poverty and work inculcated by the Gospel.

According to Sozomen, Socrates, and Basil it was quite usual in the East for the clergy to earn their own living by engaging in some handicraft, or by cultivating the soil. The Fathers taught that work was to be elevated by higher motives and by referring it to God. Highly cultured men, like Gregory Nazianzen, lauded manual labour as an agreeable recreation. "Who will give us back those days," he writes to his friend Basil, "when we worked together from morning till night felling timber, building walls, planting and watering trees, and so tiring ourselves with wheeling of heavy barrows, that our hands were blistered for long after?" [1]

It was just the same in the West, where conciliar decrees impressed on the clergy the need of working, urging them to earn by their toil at least a part of their sustenance. In the Frankish Church especially, ministers of the altar were noted for the zealous way they laboured, and for their efforts to induce the people to do likewise.[2]

Christianity, by furthering in the West the principle and practice of work, accomplished two things. It overcame the handed-down habits of the ancient world, which wasted its strength, both mental and physical, in indolence and pleasure. At the same time it harnessed to useful work that wild craving for action shared by the new nations, whose vigour and inconstancy it tamed, making them settle down to a life of order and self-denial.

## Abuses among the Clergy

500. Manual labour and the necessity for earning their own living were unavoidably a source of danger to the clergy, and not seldom a hindrance to them in keeping to the high standard of life required by their vocation. Many were overcome by that worldly spirit with which they were thrown into contact, yielded to the petty interests of the moment, became selfish and covetous and oblivious of the Church's real aim. The picture of the clergy of that day would not be complete did it not show, besides the

[1] SOZOM., *H.E.*, 7, c. 27. SOCRATES, *H.E.*, 1, c. 8. BASIL., *Ep.* 319. GREG. NAZ., *Epist.* 9, 13.

[2] Cp. RATZINGER, *Die Volkswirtschaft in ihren sittlichen Grundlagen*[2], 1895, p. 153 ff.

better characteristics, also some of the symptoms of decay, and instance some of the abuses attested by contemporaries.

If the clergy has ever fallen short of its highest ideals of virtue, this was naturally the case even more in such a period when all Italy was disturbed by deep social and political unrest. Plentiful opportunity for evil and the bad example set by others, let loose the baser instincts, even of many of the clergy.

In Italy, for instance, as the letters of Pelagius I. make clear, some of the clergy, infected by the prevalent spirit of rapine, purloined the sacred vessels. The same source mentions a cleric who so far forgot himself in his cruelty as to put out the eye of another. A third committed the common crime of rape. An irascible abbot of the monastery of Fundi trounced the saintly monk Libertinus with a footstool, and the unfortunate monk, himself a pattern of meekness, wishing to save the abbot's reputation, answered those who inquired about his wound, that he had struck his head against a chair. This curious scene was depicted on the walls of San Clemente in Rome.[1]

To take from the many instances of depravity with which the period abounds, one which has a certain interest for the history of civilisation. We actually hear of a wizard being brought to book from the ranks of the clergy. In the time of Cassiodorus, who himself took a part in the examination and unmasking of the gang, certain people were found to be practising the Black Art. One of the ringleaders, a certain Basil, escaped the severe penalty inflicted by the Christian State for such crime, and became a humble monk in Valeria under the same Equitius of whom we spoke above. He relapsed, however, into his evil ways, and tried, by means of a magic draught, to seduce a nun in the neighbouring convent. The nun became ill, so runs the story, and, under the wizard's influence, declared no one in the world could cure her save Basil alone. St. Equitius, however, saw through the trick, and expelled his false monk from the cloister, whereupon he betook himself to Rome and there continued his wicked ways. Finally he was again found out, and put to death by the infuriated Christian populace without the benefit of a trial.[2]

[1] See the Register of the letters of Pelagius in JAFFÉ-KALTENBR., 1, 125 ff. Libertinus in GREGOR. M., *Dial.* 1, c. 2. The picture (which has unhappily faded since its discovery) is mentioned in MULLOOLY, *St. Clement*, p. 240, and in *Mostra di Roma a Torino*, 1884, p. 217, n. 313.

[2] GREGOR. M., *Dial.* 1, c. 4. Cp. CASSIODOR., *Varia* 4, n. 22, 23.

In spite of the faults to be found among the clergy and the monks, there is ample justification for the acknowledgment made by many non-Catholic and even anti-Christian historians, and last of all by the French writer of the History of the Roman Empire. "The clergy," he says, "on whom the defence of both doctrine and morality devolved, defended the former, gently, with self-denial, and, when the need arose, with inexorable sternness. As for morality, they never failed to uphold it even during the darkest days of history."[1]

## Clerical Celibacy

501. In the law of celibacy the clergy had, at one and the same time, a precious aid to its efficiency and a preventative against excessive worldliness. In the sixth century this law was upheld by Popes, Bishops, and Councils as absolutely essential to ecclesiastical discipline.

The rule of continence extended then, as later, to Bishops, priests, and deacons, but not to the minor orders. With respect to subdeacons practice differed. In Rome they seem to have been early subject to the law of celibacy, though, even here, the earliest proof of such an obligation is found in the letters of Leo the Great. In most other countries of the West the law came to be applied to subdeacons only after the fifth century.[2]

Towards the end of the sixth century Pelagius II. issued a stringent admonition to the subdeacons of Sicily, who, perhaps in consequence of Greek influences, made light of the rule. In it he insisted on their conforming to Roman custom—seeing they belonged to the Church-province of Rome. Hence they were not to marry, and those who had entered into wedlock before their ordination were to abstain from marital intercourse with their wives. To his successor, Gregory the Great, this measure seemed, however, too severe, and he accordingly modified it, ruling that in future no Bishop should ordain a cleric to the subdiaconate without previously requiring of him a promise to remain unmarried.[3]

[1] V. DURUY, *Hist. des Romains*, 6 (1883), p. 192.

[2] LEO M., *Ep. ad Anastasium Thessalonic.*, n. 4; MANSI, 6, 427; *P.L.*, LIV., 672; JAFFÉ-KALTENBR., n. 411. Cp. BICKELL, *Der Cölibat eine apostolische Anordnung* (*Zeitschr. für kath. Theol.*, 2 (1878), 26–65, especially p. 32).

[3] Pelagius II., in JAFFÉ-KALTENBR., n. 1059; GREGOR. M., *Reg.*, 1, n. 42 (1, n. 44); JAFFÉ-EWALD, n. 1112.

This general, gradual extension to subdeacons of the law of celibacy is explained by the increasing part taken by this order in the service of the altar, in consequence of which it also came to be accounted one of the higher orders. In Rome, especially, subdeacons took an honourable place in the sacrifice of the Holy Eucharist, and, even now, at the solemn Papal Mass, it is the subdeacon of the Mass who, at the Communion, brings the sacred host on a paten to the Pope on his throne.

It was mainly the close association of the higher orders with the spotless sacrifice which led to celibacy being demanded of them, the Church's feeling being that those dedicated to the holiest of all services should be raised as high as possible above earthly bonds and lusts. When countless members of the laity led a virgin life out of devotion to the spotless Lamb they worshipped on the altar, was it not fitting that appointed ministers of the altar, who officiated in the mysteries, should qualify for their duties by embracing the state of celibacy? Such a law can only be described as a natural outcome of the spirit of the Church. The acceptance of this obligation was, moreover, a matter of choice to individual Christians. The Church had no desire to ordain any save those who felt the attraction of the clerical state, of its privileges and responsibilities; from those who had no vocation she forbore to demand so great a renunciation.

502. The existence in his day of a general law of celibacy for the higher orders is attested by Jerome. His expressions clearly indicate that in the East as in the West, in the Patriarchate of Rome, as well as in those of Alexandria and Antioch, chastity was imposed on all clerics in major orders. "What is the practice of the Churches of the East," he says, "of that of Egypt, and of the Apostolic See, who all take either virgin priests or such as are continent, or such as, being married, have ceased to be husbands?" Such were Jerome's words against an opponent of celibacy, *viz.* the heretic Vigilantius—the first heretic, in fact, who ventured to challenge the law in question.[1]

In tracing such legislation to its inception we are carried back to the early days of the Church. The deviations we find are really exceptions which prove the law.

It is noteworthy that the clergy raised no objections when

[1] HIERON., *Contra Vigilantium*, c. 2; *P.L.*, XXIII., 341.

Councils began to support the practice by positive laws to this effect. The first Western Council known to have enacted such a law was that of Elvira in 300–306, but it cannot be argued that the practice originated then or was introduced by this Council; as a matter of fact, the Council of Elvira is the first one held in the West of which we possess the Acts.[1]

Not only the oldest conciliar Acts, but also the earliest extant Papal decretal, presuppose clerical celibacy. This decretal is one from Siricius to Himerius of Tarragona sent in 385. It insists strongly on the perfect continence required of all Bishops, priests, and deacons. In an epistle to the Bishops of Africa, Siricius even states that the practice had been introduced "by enactment of the Apostles and Fathers." In this letter he makes known to his correspondents the decrees of a Roman Council held "near the relics of St. Peter the Apostle."[2]

From this time onward Papal decretals, such as those of Innocent I. and Leo the Great, Canons of Councils held in the West, and the works of the Fathers, afford "almost year by year an uninterrupted sequence of testimonies to the existence and observance of this obligation. And when, later on, priests, forgetful of honour and duty, sought in their madness to disturb these venerable restraints, the immortal Gregory VII. came boldly forward with the ordinances of his predecessors and of the Western Councils, to uphold at all costs the Christian ideal and the Church's freedom."[3]

In defending the cause of celibacy he was, indeed, in a sense defending the Church's freedom, for the independence of the Church herself was in some respect bound up with the moral independence of the clergy, and that exemption from the fetters of family life, from household cares, and countless earthly considerations which their unmarried state conferred on the clergy.

503. The Greeks failed to retain as faithfully as the Latins the ancient practice of celibacy in its integrity. Among them

[1] *Conc. Illiberitanum*, can. 33. Cp. HEFELE, *Conciliengesch.*, I², 168. BICKELL, ut supra, p. 35.

[2] SIRICIUS, *Ep. ad Himerium Tarraconensem*, MANSI, 3, 655; JAFFÉ-KALTENBR., n. 255. *Ep. ad. episc. africanos* (A.D. 386, in MANSI, 3, 669; JAFFÉ-KALTENBR., n. 258: the law stands "*apostolica et patrum constitutione.*" The Roman Council was held January 6, "*ad S. apostoli Petri reliquias.*"

[3] BICKELL, ibid., p. 27. See the letter of Innocent I. to the Bishops of Bruttium, and that of Leo I. to Anastasius of Thessalonica.

the relaxation early introduced took a lasting character. The Greek Father Epiphanius indeed holds that continence had been ordained by the Church even from Apostolic times, but he also shows that in certain neighbourhoods the violation of the precept was already quite usual. Only in the case of Bishops did the stern, ancient rule continue to be observed in the East, clerics in the two other major orders gradually securing the right to marry. The so-called Trullan Council of Constantinople, in 682, demanded continence from priests and deacons only when it was their turn to minister at the altar. Among the decrees on account of which this Council was declared invalid by the Popes, this one relaxing the ancient practice was certainly not the least.[1]

The general rule, originally even in the East, was that when a candidate for Holy Orders was already married, he should, with his wife's full consent, cease from further marital intercourse with her. The wife usually took a vow of chastity or retired into a convent, though it was long before mere cohabitation came to be forbidden. Gregory the Great, whilst ordering, agreeably to the Canons, the removal of other womenfolk from the Bishop's house, expressly allowed the wife to remain. Elsewhere the same Pope tells us of a pious presbyter in the country of Nursia, who "after his ordination loved his 'presbytera' as his sister, yet dreaded her as a foe, and therefore always treated her with modest caution." His meaning is that the good priest, in consorting with his wife, was ever fearful of being betrayed into a breach of his obligations. According to St. Jerome, marital intercourse with a wife wedded previous to ordination, at least in the case of Bishops, was deemed a crime equivalent to adultery. The Church's penalties for such a transgression were by no means lenient.[2]

The laws of the Christian Emperors, at the Church's request, were also made to serve the cause of celibacy. It was felt that the help of the secular power would more effectually check the offences arising from human frailty.

[1] EPIPHANIUS, *Adv. haer.*, c. 48; *P.G.*, XLI., 868, c. 59, 1024. *Expos. fidei cath.*, c. 21; *P.G.*, XLII., 824. *Conc. Trull.*, can. 13.

[2] GREGOR. M., *Reg.*, 9, n. 110 (9, n. 60), to certain *defensores* and *patroni*: "*Si qui episcoporum, quos commissi tibi patrimonii finis includit, cum mulieribus degunt, hoc omnino compescas, et de cetero illic eas habitare nullo modo patiaris, exceptis iis, quas sacrorum canonum censura permittit, id est matre, amita, germana et aliis huiusmodi, de quibus prava non possit esse suspicio. . . . Hoc tantum adiecto, ut hi, sicut canonica decrevit auctoritas, uxores, quas caste debent regere, non relinquant.*" Cp. *Reg.*, 13, n. 38 (13, n. 35). On the presbyter of Nursia, see *Dial.* 4, c. 11. HIERON., *Adv. Iovinianum*, 1, c. 34.

One of the most emphatic decrees on celibacy belongs to Justinian I. In his legislative zeal this Emperor outstripped the Church, and refused to allow a widower with children to be promoted to a bishopric; in practice, however, little account was made of this new regulation. As for the penalties, two recently discovered Imperial decrees may be cited, one of which was issued before the decretal on celibacy of Pope Siricius. Both order the offspring of Bishops, priests, and deacons, born after their father's ordination, to be condemned to penal servitude. These laws bear the stamp of the relations then existing between the Church and the newly Christianised Empire.[1]

What we have said explains the frank allusions occasionally found in our sources to the promotion to high dignity in the Church of the sons of presbyters, Bishops, or Popes. Pope Felix III. is described as an ancestor (*atavus*) of Gregory the Great; Pope Agapetus as the son of Gordian, a Roman presbyter; Pope Silverius as the son of Pope Hormisdas; Theodore, Bishop of Jerusalem, as the father of Pope Theodore; a deacon as the husband of Petronia, buried at S. Paul's; and so forth. In all these cases the children had been born before their father's ordination. The name of "presbytera," already met with once, was the term usually applied to a wife married to a priest before his ordination, the Bishop's wife being "episcopa." In what close companionship the husband and wife often remained notwithstanding their strict observance of the Canons is proved by the epitaph of the saintly Bishop Cassius of Narni, where he speaks of his "sweetest consort," Fausta, laid to rest in front of his own tomb.[2]

## The Ordinations

504. At the time of Leo I. no fixed days had yet been appointed in Rome for the bestowal of Holy Orders, though

[1] JUSTINIAN., L., 42, § 1, *Cod. de episc. et cler.*: "*Oportet episcopum, minime impeditum affectionibus carnalium liberorum, omnium fidelium spiritualem esse patrem*," &c. For the decrees, see HÄNEL, *Berichte über die Verhandl. der sächs. Gesellschaft der Wiss. zu Leipzig*, 20, 1. BICKELL (ut supra), p. 37.

[2] On Felix III. (483–492), whose own father seems to have been a priest (see present work, vol. ii. p. 76 and p. 111 f.), see GREG. M., *In Evang. hom.*, 38; *Dial.*, 4, c. 16; JOANNES DIAC., *Vita S. Gregorii*, 1, c. 1. On Pope Agapetus (535–536), present work, vol. ii. p. 276. On Pope Silverius, ibid., p. 281. On Pope Theodore (642–649), *Liber pont.*, 1, 331, no. 125. On Petronia, the epitaph in San Paolo fuori le Mura: "*Levitae coniunx Petronia, forma pudoris*," &c., in DE ROSSI, *Inscr. christ.*, 1, 1, 371. On Cassius, see above, p. 262. The father of Damasus was also a priest, see present work, vol. i. p. 205.

December was the usual month for ordinations, owing to its coming just before Christmas. In the *Liber pontificalis* the account of the orders conferred by the early Popes is constantly preceded by the words "*in mense Decembrio.*" In that season the Popes not only ordained the priests and deacons required in their own Church of Rome, but also consecrated Bishops for various parts of Christendom ("*episcopi per diversa loca*").

It was only under the pontificate of Gelasius that in Rome the dates for conferring orders were settled. This Pope assigned for this purpose the "fasts of the fourth, seventh, and tenth months," and the first, fourth, or fifth Sunday of Lent (*Quadragesima*). The ceremony began in the evening of the Saturday vigil, the actual ordination taking place the following morning at the Mass. As March was reckoned the first month of the year, the ordinations were accordingly held in June, September, and December, *i.e.* in the three seasons, which, when a fourth had been added in Lent, came to be known as *Quattuor Tempora*, "Quatember," or "Ember Days."[1]

In this wise the whole Church was enabled to take a part, by fasting and prayer, in the promotion conferred on its ministers.

The three fasts of the fourth, seventh, and tenth months hereby received an entirely new significance, and, like the Lenten-Ember Days, were henceforth regarded as seasons during which penance was to be performed in order to obtain Divine Grace for the newly ordained, which was not at all the purpose for which the three more ancient sets of Ember Days had been instituted.

505. To add to the solemnity of the occasion, the ordinations were made to coincide with the Stations, *i.e.* with those religious exercises in which the clergy and people of Rome were wont to go in procession with the Pope to some famous church where Mass was sung. The Roman Church thus stamped the Ordination Service with a certain character of legal publicity, surrounding it with formalities in which the faithful also had their share, and which

[1] GELASIUS, *Epist. ad episc. Lucaniae*, n. 11; THIEL, p. 368; JAFFÉ-KALTENBR., n. 636: "*quarti mensis ieiunio, septimi et decimi, sed etiam quadragesimalis initii.*" PROBST, *Die Sacramentarien*, p. 98, on the letter of Pope Gelasius. Cp. the epistle of Pelagius I. in JAFFÉ-KALTENBR., n. 995, 1002, 1015, 1017, in which the times for ordination are spoken of. A deacon who had been chosen bishop of the "*ecclesia Consilinitana*" is invited by him to attend in Rome for consecration before Easter, "*ut vel sabbato ipso noctis magnae post baptismum valeat ordinari. . . . Alioquin necesse est eum usque ad quarti mensis ieiunia sustinere.*" JAFFÉ-KALTENBR., n. 1015.

were well in keeping with so important an occasion as the conferring of orders on new candidates for the ministry. The first Station held on the Wednesday in Ember Week in the presence of the candidates for ordination was at Sta. Maria Maggiore; the second, on the Friday, was at the new church of the Apostles SS. Philip and James (XII. Apostles), near Trajan's Forum; the third, finally, on the Saturday, assumed the form of a vigil followed by the ordination, and took place at St. Peter's in the Vatican. The choice and sequence of the churches is significant. The Stations began in the Esquiline church of Our Lady, because this second cathedral of the Pope was more conveniently situated for the people than the distant Lateran where the Pope resided. The church of the Apostles, erected by Narses as a memorial of Byzantine rule, was visited next, the Popes also showing their predilection for it in other ways. It was, however, particularly appropriate that the proceedings should close at the Tomb of the Apostle, who, with the symbol of the Keys, received from Christ the plenitude of spiritual power.[1]

At Sta. Maria Maggiore, the first Station, soon after the beginning of the liturgy, an ecclesiastical notary mounted the ambo and announced where the next Station was to be held; he then proceeded to publish the names of the candidates present, with the title or parish to which each one belonged, and the order to which he was to be promoted. The concluding formula of these banns of ordination ran: "If anyone has aught against these men, let him come forward in all confidence, and for the sake of God speak his mind; let him, however, be mindful of his condition." After a pause, and in the absence of any objection, the candidates were called up one by one and led into the Presbyterium, where they took up positions to the right and left in the semi-circle of the apse, remaining there until the Pope had completed his solemn Mass.[2]

The proclamation of the names, with a view to bringing the matter to the cognisance of all, was even more emphatic on the

[1] The list of Stations is the same in the most ancient Sacramentaries and in the Roman Missal now in use.

[2] *Sacramentarium Gelasianum*, lib. 1, n. 20: "*Ordo qualiter in romana sedis apostolicae ecclesia presbyteri, diaconi vel subdiaconi eligendi sint.*" On the antiquity of this Ordo, see, however, PROBST, *Sacramentarien*, pp. 200, 246, and DUCHESNE, *Origines du culte*, p. 337 ff. Sufficient attention has not been hitherto given to the description of the Roman rite of ordination in DEUSDEDIT, *Collectio canonum*, lib. 2, *De romano clero*, no. 91: *De gradibus romanae ecclesiae.* Ed. MARTINUCCI, p. 206.

Friday in the church of the Apostles, and on the Saturday in St. Peter's—the banns on each occasion being published in the presence of the Pope, the City clergy, and the people. At the present time these three proclamations, in an altered form, in episcopal cities throughout the world, still precede the bestowal of orders.

Naturally enough, in the early Church as well as later, candidates were previously examined in private, for it was a question of admitting them to the most sacred functions of the Church, and to a position which, more than any other, demanded a previous exemplary life as a guarantee that the men would fit their vocation. We find some traces of such an examination in the so-called eighth Roman Ordo. The wording of this Ordo manifestly dates from antiquity, as it presupposes the existence of many Pagans who enter the Church at an advanced age, and contains allusions to that shocking collapse of public morals, which, as we know from other sources, marked the close of heathenism. The candidates, according to this Ordo, were required to answer privately on their oath, whether they had committed any of the four following sins: whether they had ever been guilty of sodomy, bestiality, or adultery, or had ever violated a consecrated virgin.[1]

506. The rich and varied ceremonial of the Ordination Service, for the beauty of its prayers and the depth of its symbolism, compares well with the solemn ceremonial of Baptism when that sacrament was administered on the "Great Night," *i.e.* the night before Easter Sunday. In the night of baptism the new members of the Church were born in the waters of regeneration, and on that other night the Church conferred in St. Peter's the indelible character and grace of ordination on those elected to be members of the clergy and ministers of the mysteries of God. It is, however, rather difficult to describe the actual ceremony of ordination at the period of which we are speaking, for the details given in the Gelasian and Gregorian Sacramentaries belong to the later period, in which these books were revised. The prayers used in the ordination seem, however, to belong to an earlier age, and even to have been in use under Pope Gelasius, for we also find them in the same form in the so-called Sacramentary of Leo the Great. Moreover, certain addresses to the ordinandi, which the

[1] *Ordo VIII.*, n. 5, *P.L.*, LXXVIII., 1001. DUCHESNE, l.c., p. 341.

two books first mentioned put into the Pope's mouth, appear also in the so-called "Statutes of the Early Church," compiled by St. Cæsarius of Arles.[1]

The main feature of the Ordination Service was the imposition of hands upon the candidates for the priesthood and the diaconate, and the accompanying prayer by the Pope. The Acts of the Apostles testify to the use of this ceremony in the bestowal of orders, just as they insist that those ordained are to be chosen as vicars of the Apostles, whose work they must continue.

Even the anointing with holy oil of the hands of the new presbyters seems to have been introduced in the West as early as the sixth century, when it is found in Gaul; in the East the custom of anointing goes back even further. It was not, however, till later that the custom arose in the Western Provinces of presenting the candidates for higher orders with certain vessels used at the altar, which, being chosen as symbols of the power to be bestowed, varied according to the order conferred. Subdeacons in Rome, at the beginning of the sixth century, simply received the chalice, the ordination consisting merely in this bestowal.[2]

At the Tomb of Peter it was only natural that the relation between the orders conferred, and the office of the Prince of the Apostles, should be particularly insisted upon in the ordination. According to some later rituals, the stoles for the deacons were taken from the Confession of St. Peter, where they had been hallowed by remaining awhile. Bishops about to be consecrated in St. Peter's had to read and confirm on oath their profession of faith beside the altar above the Apostle's Tomb, and a copy, with their signature appended, was then deposited near the Confession.[3]

Bishops were not consecrated exclusively at the times mentioned above, and rightly, for it would often have been inconvenient for a candidate who had come to Rome to receive

[1] For the consecration prayers, see PROBST, l.c., p. 200. For the *Statuta ecclesiae antiquae*, PROBST, ibid., p. 246; DUCHESNE, l.c., p. 337. Cæsarius of Arles is the author or compiler, as was proved by MALNORY, *Congrès internat. des catholiques à Paris*, 1888, 2, 428 ff. It will be found in *S. Leon. M. Opp.*, ed. BALLERINI, 3, 653 ff. Cp. MANSI, 3, 945 ff.

[2] John, the Roman deacon, says, at the beginning of the sixth century: "*Cuius hic apud nos ordo est, ut accepto sacratissimo calice . . . subdiaconus iam dicatur.*" *P.L.*, LIX., 405.

[3] On the stoles, see DEUSDEDIT, l.c. On the Bishops' Profession of Faith, with the formula: "*tibi, beate Petre apostole, apostolorum princeps, pura mente et conscientia optuli.*" *Liber diurn.*, ed. SICKEL, form. 83, p. 93.

consecration to wait so long to the detriment of his see or of the mission where he laboured. The Pope was accordingly accustomed to perform the rite of consecration on any Sunday in the year, and even in churches other than St. Peter's.

The Pope himself was, however, as a rule, consecrated in St. Peter's, for, as he was usually chosen from the ranks of the Roman deacons or priests, consecration was necessary even in his case. It was performed by the Bishops of Ostia, Portus Romanus, and Albanum.[1]

That new bishops generally should be consecrated by at least three of their rank was already a rule at the beginning of the fourth century. The presence of several consecrators was expected to give the proceeding—which was one of the most essential rites of the Church—greater assurance of validity, and at the same time to mark outwardly its importance. When, however, the Pope consecrated a Bishop, it was a time-honoured practice attested in the sixth century by Fulgentius Ferrandus, the deacon of Carthage, not to require the attendance of other bishops.[2]

The reason for this was that the Bishop of Rome, by his very office, represented in some sense the whole body of the episcopate.[3]

[1] *Liber diurn.*, form. 57, p. 46.
[2] *Breviarium*, c. 6: "*ut unus episcopus episcopum non ordinet, excepta ecclesia romana.*"
[3] DUCHESNE, *Origines du culte*, p. 364.

## CHAPTER V

### SOME PHASES OF ECCLESIASTICAL LIFE IN ROME

### Christian Counterparts of Pagan Festivals—The Ember Days

507. JUST as the Roman outdoor procession on St. Mark's Day, the *Litania maior* of April 25, coincided with the heathen Robigalia, which the Popes in this wise endeavoured to supersede, so other celebrations kept by the Roman Church show a similar connection with the religious observances of heathen times.

Instead of prohibiting with misplaced severity any observance by the faithful of certain time-honoured days, set apart in olden times, the authorities of the Church strove to impart a Christian character to the traditional practices with which the people were familiar.

To the number of such festivals which mark the transition from Paganism to Christianity belongs the feast of the **Collection** or **Oblation,** which St. Leo the Great often mentions, a charitable festival of which we hear no more after his time. It may have died out in consequence of the establishment of the Roman deaconries and of the more regular distribution of alms. Pope Leo looked on it as a venerable festival of Christian Rome, and even traced it back to the time of the Apostles. In his homilies he repeatedly recommends the faithful to offer on this day their contributions so as to enable the authorities of the Church to relieve the distress from which fellow-Christians suffered. Now this feast of the Collection corresponded exactly with the *Ludi Apollinares,* which began on July 5th and ended on the 13th. These games were peculiar in that they were financed by public subscription. Hence, just as on this occasion each visitor was wont to sacrifice a little of his money for the amusement of the common people, so the Christians of Rome seem to have modified this customary donation into an offering for the indigent.[1]

[1] Cp. Dom Germain Morin in the *Revue Bénéd.* of Maredsous, 1897, p. 340. In what follows we have drawn largely on this excellent article (pp. 337–346), which deals with the origin of the Ember Days. Morin quotes, for instance, from Leo the Great's *Serm.*, 8–9, the following passage referring to the Collection, but which also bears on the origin

The feast of **St. Peter's Chair** (*Natale Petri de Cathedra*) fell on February 22, on the very day when Pagans kept their popular festival of the "dear relatives" (*Cara Cognatio*), a sort of remembrance of the dead members of each family. The latter was accompanied by banquets in which Christians could scarcely share. We need only bear in mind that Peter was considered the father of the Roman Church, by means of whom all his followers are linked together as by a family-bond, to understand why the Christians should have fixed on this day for the commemoration of the founding of the Apostolic See. Tradition was indeed silent as to the day when Peter established his See, but as his death was solemnised (June 29), there was a certain fitness in celebrating also the assumption of his Roman office, particularly as it was usual to observe the birthday (*Natalis*) of Bishops as well as their death (*Depositio*).[1]

508. It would also seem that **Christmas Day,** solemnised on December 25th, has some connection with a feast of the heathen Calendar. Though the actual day of Christ's birth was not vouched for by any certain tradition, and though the East kept the Epiphany on January 6th as the feast of the Christ's entrance into the world, Rome, from the end of the third century, preferred to keep the commemoration on the day on which the winter solstice fell, and on which the festival of *Sol Novus* was celebrated according to the Roman Calendar. In the Philocalian list, December 25th is given as *Natalis Invicti; i.e.* the birthday of the invincible Sun-God, whilst according to Mithraic practice—and, as we know, Mithra-worship loomed large in the heathen world of the third and fourth century—December 25th marked the commencement of the Salvation brought by Mithra, the Sun-God.

It is therefore no great wonder that, in the endeavour to Christianise the heathen festivals, this same day was set apart for the celebration of the rise of the Sun of the world, *i.e.* Christ. We must bear in mind that the day of His death was known

of the festivals to be described: "*Nam illi beatissimi discipuli veritatis hoc divinitus inspirati commendavere doctrina, ut quotiens caecitas paganorum superstitionibus suis esset instantior, tunc praecipue populus Dei orationibus et operibus pietatis instaret. . . . Ut quia in hoc tempore gentilis quondam populus superstitiosius daemonibus serviebat, contra profanas hostias impiorum* **sacratissima nostrarum celebraretur oblatio.**"

[1] DUCHESNE, *Origines du culte*, p. 266 f. KELLNER, *Heortology, a Hist. of the Christian Festivals*, p. 301 ff.

approximately (this being generally believed to have occurred on March 25th), and as He was also believed to have lived exactly thirty-three years, the anniversary of His conception was made to coincide with the day of His crucifixion, and His birth was placed nine months later, *i.e.* on December 25th. This, at least, in the most probable explanation why the Philocalian calendar, compiled in Rome in 336, should give December 25th as the date of Christ's birth, and why the contemporary *Depositio Episcoporum*, giving the anniversaries of the bishops, should make the ecclesiastical year commence between December 8th and the 27th of the same month.[1]

509. We meet with a yet more striking coincidence of Christian and Pagan festivals in the three **Ember Weeks.** At first, the Roman Church kept these seasons—which when a fourth had been added came to be known as *Quattuor Tempora*—only three times in the year, *viz.* in the fourth, seventh, and tenth months, according to ancient reckoning, *i.e.* in June, September, and December. It was at these same times that the heathen set aside certain days (*Feriae*) for the purpose of invoking the blessing of the gods on the fruits of the fields. At the beginning of summer the prayers were for the harvest; in the autumn for the vintage, and in winter for the freshly-sown seed. It is curious to note how, even now, the Scripture-readings for the Ember-Day services contain allusions to the agricultural seasons. From this alone we may reasonably conjecture that the Christian Ember-Day services are a continuation of the custom prevailing in heathen times, and that the triple fast observed in each Ember Week, and also the station-processions, were originally introduced to implore God's blessing on the harvest and vintage.[2]

To show this still more clearly we may point out that, of the three Pagan *Feriae*, the *Feriae Messis* fell in June or soon after, according to the situation of the locality and the nature of the harvest; the *Feriae Vindemiales* occurred between August 19th, the festival of the *Vinalia*, and the September equinox; finally the *Feriae Sementinae*, the most important of the three, fell in the week before the winter solstice. The precise date of the last

[1] MORIN, l.c., p. 340. Cp. DUCHESNE, l.c., p. 247 ff., and KELLNER, op. cit., p. 151.
[2] MORIN, l.c., p. 341 ff. On the heathen *Feriae*, see C. JULLIAN in DAREMBERG ET SAGLIO, *Dict. des antiquités grecques et romaines*, art. *Feriae*.

was left to the decision of the priests, who had previously to make it known; it is quite likely that the same rule held good with regard to the others too, about which, however, we know less. At the *Feriae Sementinae* people brought their offerings to Ceres and Tellus on the day fixed by the Pontifex. Ovid was moved by the petitions offered on that day to sing in verse the praise of peace-bringing Ceres, and to rejoice that the iron weapons of war have been made into peaceful implements of husbandry.[1]

It is somewhat remarkable that the date of the Ember Days too was originally not invariable, though they always fell in the months mentioned above. Later on, it is true, an attempt was made to fix them in certain determinate weeks of the Church's year, but even in 683, the Ember Days of the fourth month—subsequently kept always in Whitsun Week—were not observed till the third week after Pentecost, on June 27th. As the dates were movable, the time appointed had to be published by the ecclesiastical authorities of Rome, just as it had been by the heathen priests. We still possess the formula for the *Denuntiatio ieiuniorum quarti, septimi et decimi mensis*, in which the fasts are proclaimed for the Wednesday and Friday, and for the Saturday (besides the fast) a "Vigil at St. Peter's," *i.e.* an all-night watch with prayer and lessons in the Vatican Basilica.[2]

Just as the heathen "*Feriae*" demanded a certain purification and sanctification of all who took part in them, so likewise the Christian proclamation of which we are speaking points out that the "Purity of fasting sanctifies both body and soul," and that the wholesome institution of these days allows us to "wash away by fasting and almsdeeds the stain of sin contracted through

[1] Ovid., *Fast.*, 1, v. 597 ff.: "*Bella diu tenuere viros, erat aptior ensis | Vomere; cedebat taurus arator equo. | Sarcula cessabant, versique in pila ligones, | Factaque de rastri pondere cassis erat. | Gratia dis domuique tuae: religata catenis | Iam pridem nostro sub pede bella iacent. | Sub iuga bos veniat, sub terras semen aratas. | Pax Cererem nutrit, pacis alumna Ceres.*"

[2] For Ember Days in June 683, see *Liber pont.*, 1, 360, *Leo II.*, n. 150, and note 11. Proclamation of the Ember Days, in the *Sacramentarium Gelasianum*, 1, n. 82: *Denuntiatio ieiuniorum quarti, septimi et decimi mensis.* "*Anniversarii, fratres carissimi, ieiunii puritatem, qua et corporis acquiritur et animae sanctitas, nos commonet* illius *mensis instaurata devotio. Quarta igitur et sexta feria sollicito convenientes occursu, offeramus Deo spirituale ieiunium; die vero sabbati apud beatum Petrum, cuius nos intercessionibus credimus adiuvandos, sanctas vigilias christiana pietate celebremus, ut per hanc institutionem salutiferam peccatorum sordes, quas corporis fragilitate contrahimus, ieiuniis et eleemosynis abluamus, auxiliante Domino nostro Iesu Christo, qui cum Patre et Spiritu sancto vivit et regnat Deus per omnia saecula saeculorum.*" Cp. Leo M., *Serm.*, 78, 80, 86, 88, 89, etc., where he says, in almost identical words: "*Quarta igitur et sexta feria ieiunemus, sabbato autem ad beatum Petrum apostolum pariter vigilemus.*"

human frailty." Nevertheless that these days were seasons of prayer for the fruits of the earth, as already stated, is clear enough from the tenor of the lessons and prayers recited in ancient times upon these occasions. The Liturgy of the Ember Days of December implored, for instance, that the seed confided to the earth might grow up for the earthly welfare of the people. At the same time in view, of the approaching festival of Christmas, the Church recalls the thoughts of those assembled to the true seed-corn, which is Christ, and thus infuses a spiritual element derived from Christianity into the traditional old-time festival. "The Divine Seed descends," says the Preface in the Leonine Sacramentary, "and whereas the fruits of the field support our earthly life, this seed from on high gives our soul the Food of Immortality. The earth has yielded its corn, wine, and oil, and now the ineffable birth approaches of Him who through His mercy bestows the Bread of Life on the sons of God." These words enable us better to understand why in those days the Liturgy repeatedly exclaims, with the Prophet Isaias, "Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain the Just: let the earth be opened, and bud forth a Saviour."[1]

To this day we read, in the Mass for the Ember Wednesday before Christmas, a passage from Isaias which forms the counterpart of the praises of peaceful Ceres sung by Ovid: "They shall turn their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into sickles; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they be exercised any more to war." The lesson on the Ember Friday after Pentecost refers more directly to the harvest, and relates how God promised the Jews that their "floors shall be filled with wheat" and their "presses shall overflow with wine and oil."[2]

Leo the Great, speaking at a time when the Ember Days had not, as yet, come to be considered merely as ordination days for the Roman clergy, points out their close connection with the harvest. "Just as we are grateful to the Lord," he says in a homily preached during the Ember Days of the tenth month, "for the hope of happiness to which we look forward, and for

[1] *Sacramentar. Gelas.*, 2, n. 85: "*Nec est nobis seminum desperanda fecunditas, cum pro supplicationibus nostris annua devotione venerandus etiam matris Virginis fructus salutaris intervenit Christus Dominus noster.*" The Preface in the Leonine Sacramentary in the edition of Feltoe (1896), p. 117. Cp. in the Roman Missal the third Collect and Post-communion for Ember Saturday.

[2] Isa. ii. 4; Lev. xxiii. 10 ff.; Deut. xxvi. 10.

the better things for which He is preparing us, so we should also praise and give Him thanks for the earthly gifts which, each year, He bestows upon us. From the beginning He regulated the fertility of the earth, and fixed unalterably the laws of growth for each seed, that the kindly providence of the Creator might ever be visible. Everything which cornfields, vineyards, and olive gardens bring forth for mankind comes from the bountiful goodness of a merciful God."[1]

510. An allusion to the original association of the Ember Days with petitions for the fruits of the earth is also found in the *Liber pontificalis*, though its unreliable author gratuitously makes Pope Callistus the founder of the celebration, quoting in this connection also an inappropriate passage from the Prophet Zacharias (viii. 19), as if it had given rise to the custom. He says: "This Pope appointed a Saturday fast three times in each year, one for the corn, one for the wine, and one for the oil, agreeably with the prophecy." One point worth noting is, that he connects the Ember Days of December with the olive crop, also mentioned in the previously quoted homily of Leo the Great. In Italy the olives are, as a matter of fact, gathered after the Ember Days of December, and it is quite possible that the prayer and fasting at this season was to some extent intended to secure a successful crop of a fruit so invaluable to the country. What is still more remarkable is that the *Liber pontificalis* speaks only of three sets of Ember Days, though, when it was written, the fourth was already in existence. It was in the fifth century that the first week of the forty days of Lent was added to the ancient list of Ember Days, its Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday being henceforth reckoned with the three older seasons, the four seasons obtaining for the institution the name of *Quattuor Tempora*. This increase, which may have taken place under Leo the Great, is presupposed in the decree of Pope Gelasius previously spoken of, which directed that the ordinations in Rome should take place on the Ember Days.[2]

Whether the introduction of the Ember Days belongs to the third century, which was that of Pope Callistus, mentioned by the *Liber pontificalis*, or a still earlier age, cannot be ascertained

[1] Leo M., *Serm.* 5, *in ieiunio mensis decimi*, n. 1.
[2] *Liber pont.*, I, 141, *Callistus*, n. 17. On Gelasius, see above, p. 276, note 1.

with any degree of certainty. Leo the Great was of opinion that the institution went back much further. In one of his sermons he refers it to "our holy fathers," and several times, elsewhere, he even ascribes it to the Apostles, though without bringing forward any sufficient proof for this opinion.[1]

At the same time, the observance of the Ember Days may be connected in some way with the weekly fasts on the Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, which were customary at an early date in the Roman Church, in which case they might well date from the remotest antiquity.

The Roman Church alone, in earlier times, was wont to observe the Ember Days. The institution was, in other words, purely local, a fact which fits well with its derivation from the pagan *Feriae* celebrated at Rome. It was not until after Pope Gelasius, and in consequence of Papal decrees to this effect, that the practice of keeping the Ember Days and holding ordinations at these seasons spread to other Churches. It was adopted first of all by the suffragan Bishops of the Roman Church, and then in the rest of Italy and elsewhere. Finally, the Carlovingians, in their readiness to promote Roman usages, naturalised it everywhere, save in Spain and at Milan.

## Other Fasts observed in Rome

511. With respect to the regular **Weekly Fasts** observed in the Roman Church, the Wednesday and Friday fasts are mentioned even in the *Doctrina Apostolorum*. The fasts are also alluded to in the "Shepherd" of Hermas, though the days are not stated, whilst the Wednesday and Friday are expressly mentioned by Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, and others. The Saturday fast appears to have been originally a mere continuation of the Friday fast (*continuare ieiunium*, says Tertullian), customary in certain localities, though in Rome it was soon made an independent fast-day. Even in Augustine's time the

[1] Leo M., *Serm.* 16, n. 2: "*in quo sancti patres nostri divinitus inspirati decimi mensis sanxere ieiunium.*" *Serm.* 12, n. 4: "*apostolicis traditionibus.*" *Serm.* 93, n. 3: "*et apostolicis et* **legalibus** *institutionibus.*" The "*legales institutiones*" might be a Jewish custom, which, as Leo also explains elsewhere, had been retained by the Church. Duchesne (*Origines du culte*, p. 222), like Morin, does not see his way to admit any influence of the Old Testament customs, but, instead of seeing in the Ember Days an outcome of the Pagan *Feriae*, he thinks it more likely that they are mere relics of the ancient weekly fasts practised in the Roman Church.

observance in Rome of the three weekly fasts had fallen off, for he speaks of it merely as a "frequent" practice of the Romans, which, in his opinion, was no longer obligatory. In course of time it became the rule to demand merely the abstinence from certain foods on Fridays and Saturdays.[1]

To proceed, however, to the consideration of the lengthy fast known as Lent. The observance of this fast remained a strict law. Though the custom of different Churches varied with regard to the forty days' fast which preceded Easter, the chief festival of the Church's year, yet the origin of the great fast must go back to the Church's infancy. The fifth canon of the Nicene Council (325) takes for granted the existence and observance everywhere of the Easter fast.[2]

512. The forty days' fast which our Saviour was pleased to undergo is repeatedly instanced by the Fathers as the pattern of this general practice of the Church. This Gregory the Great does in a sermon preached to the Romans assembled in the Lateran Basilica on the first Sunday in Lent. In eloquent language, the Pope points out the inward spirit with which the fast should be observed, unless it is to become a mere outward exercise devoid of use. After referring to Moses and Elias, who prepared themselves for their mission by forty days' abstinence from food, but who also saw in personal holiness an inseparable companion of mortification, he exclaims: "Verily, it is just that we should subject our body to the penances of mortification, since its lusts have led us to transgress God's commandments. . . . At this holy season let each one exert himself to overcome the enemy he bears within him, and to curb his unbridled appetites. Let him seek to master his own passions and his lower nature, in doing which he will be following the injunction of St. Paul, 'Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing unto God.'"[3]

Gregory was not content with recommending in this manner inward self-renunciation as a condition of meritorious fasting; he

[1] See the passages in DUCHESNE, *Origines du culte*, p. 218 ff. AUGUST., *Ep.* 36 (written in 396–397): "*verum etiam christianus, qui quarta et sexta feria et ipso sabbato ieiunare consuevit, quod* frequenter *Romana plebs facit.*"

[2] The Nicene Council orders (can. 5) one of the two annual Provincial Councils to be held πρὸ τῆς τεσσαρακοστῆς.

[3] In *Evang. hom.* 16, n. 6: "*Illud ieiunium Deus approbat . . . quod ex pietate conditur. Hoc ergo quod tibi subtrahis, alteri largire,*" &c. Rom. xii. 1. On the homily, see PFEILSCHIFTER, *Die authentische Ausgabe der Evangelienhomilien Gregors des Grossen* (1900), p. 20.

also impressed upon his Romans the need of ennobling their outward mortification by works of mercy, by almsgiving, and the practice of every virtue. "God rejoices in every sacrifice of fasting offered Him by hands which are full of deeds of charity, and zealously trained in works of brotherly love." "Put aside wrath and hatred; set a bridle on your own will, for it is useless to chastise the body if you strive not against the faults and failings of the spirit."

This same Pope calls the great fast a tithe offered to God, though by this he does not mean to represent it as a mere thanksgiving for temporal gifts received from God. Certain other days had been appointed from the earliest times for such thanksgivings. Lent was more a time for recollection and repentance, nor was it a preparation merely for Easter, but also for the solemn celebration of the sacrament of baptism administered on Easter Eve, and at which other Christians were wont to attend in memory of their own baptism. Catechumens had ever been required to fast, in which act consisted a part of their preparation for receiving the sacrament of the new birth. The part taken by the Faithful in the proceedings on Holy Saturday, and in the exercises which led up to them, helped to quicken the grace already received at baptism, and, in early times, when the Church increased her ranks at Easter by the admission of crowds of convert Pagans, the practice was one imposed even by the religious sense.

513. In Rome, during the sixth century, Lent began, not on Ash Wednesday, but on the following Monday. Such was the rule under Gregory the Great, who, in the above sermon preached at the beginning of Lent, expressly mentions that, according to Roman custom, the fast days previous to Easter were not forty in number, but only thirty-six; on the Sundays during Lent, people did not abstain from food. Only in the seventh century were four days added to bring the number up to forty. Characteristically enough, St. Gregory, comparing 36 with 365 (the number of days in the year), finds in the comparison a proof that the thirty-six days of Lent are indeed the tithe offered by every grateful Christian to the Lord.

Even in Gregory's time it is clear, however, that the three Sundays preceding Lent—Septuagesima, Sexagesima, and Quinquagesima—were kept with great solemnity, stations being held

at the principal churches. Gregory lets us know from his Gospel Homilies both the places where these stations were held and the Gospel readings used at the Mass. As is the case so often elsewhere, the old stations and lessons for these days are the same as those given in the present Missal. On Septuagesima Sunday the station-procession went to the Tomb of St. Lawrence on the *Via Tiburtina*, on Sexagesima to that of St. Paul on the *Via Ostia*, on Quinquagesima to the Tomb of St. Peter at the Vatican. In an ascending scale, honour was thus rendered to the three saints on whom Rome set the most store.[1]

The beautiful liturgy of these three Sundays is full of the Church's appeals for help, a fact which shows it to have been composed in a period of sore distress for Rome. The Introit of the Mass for Septuagesima at once brings to mind the days of public danger: "My heart is troubled within me, and the fear of death is fallen upon me. Fear and trembling are come upon me. Save me, O God; for the waters are come in even unto my soul." If the liturgy of this Sunday belongs to the sixth century, then our thoughts stray involuntarily to the days of Pelagius I. and John III., and the great revival of worship which followed the misery of the Gothic War. Then it was that Italy suddenly found herself invaded anew by the barbarians, whilst Rome trembled at the approach of the Lombards. It seems quite likely that John III., who, in his "love for the cemeteries," gave great attention to the service at the Saints' tombs, also introduced those three stations in the Cemetery churches of St. Lawrence, St. Paul, and St. Peter, in order to implore help, and that the celebration became permanent owing to the continued presence of danger.[2]

514. In Lent, stations were held on each week-day, except Thursday, at one of the principal churches of the City, or in some Cemetery Basilica of the neighbourhood. Stations for the Thursdays were first introduced by Gregory II. (715–731). This explains why the Gelasian Sacramentary gives no Mass for Thursdays in Lent, though it has a Mass for every other day.[3]

[1] See the titles of Gregory the Great's homilies on the Gospels, n. 2, 15, 19, and my article, *Die Stationsfeier und der erste röm. Ordo*, in the *Zeitschr. für kath. Theol.*, 9 (1885), particularly the table on p. 404 ff.

[2] DUCHESNE, *Origines du culte*, p. 234, considers that these three Sundays made their appearance only in the seventh century. I think this scarcely compatible with Gregory's homilies, even if we reject the titles as later additions.

[3] See present work, vol. ii. p. 83, on the Stations.

On some days, however, the celebration took place in the Papal Cathedral, *i.e.* in the Lateran Basilica, where all the clergy were expected to gather around the Pope. The stations at the Lateran fell on the first Sunday in Lent, on Palm Sunday, on the Thursday in Holy Week (*Feria V. in Coena Domini*), and, above all, on Holy Saturday, when the Vigil of the "Great Night" ushered in the feast of Easter.

On this occasion the people of Rome came in vast crowds from the more thickly inhabited portions of the City to the huge open space, the *Campus Lateranensis* lying south-east of Rome, where there stood the majestic Constantinian Basilica, serving mainly as the Pope's own church, and the great Papal residence, the *Episcopium Lateranense*, called after the ancient family of the Laterani.

The venerable Lateran Basilica, the "mother and head of the City and of the Universe," as it was called in the Middle Ages, affords us an excellent opportunity of studying in detail the proceedings in the larger Basilicas, particularly upon the greater festivals.

In the following pages, while devoting our attention to the Lateran Basilica, we shall pass in review some of the old customs in vogue among the Faithful and the Clergy who visited or served the church.[1]

## The Forecourt of the Papal Cathedral

515. The reader should endeavour to place himself in imagination in the stately and animated Piazza surrounding the ancient Lateran. For already more than five hundred years a strange calm has overtaken this square. The huge buildings situated around it, especially since the Popes, towards the close of the Middle Ages, removed their residence to the Vatican, seem to have sunk into a state of solemn isolation and repose. During the sixth century, however, and in the early Middle Ages, this

[1] On the front of the church may still be read the restored twelfth-century inscription, written in old characters, and beginning: DOGMATE PAPALI DATVR AC SIMVL IMPERIALI | QVOD SIM CVNCTARVM MATER CAPVT ECCLESIARVM. DE ROSSI, *Inscr. christ.*, 2, 1, pp. 306, 322, 425. ROHAULT DE FLEURY, *Le Latran au moyen-âge*, p. 468. The inscriptions of Gregory XI., in 1372, and Sixtus IV., in 1475, which also still exist, likewise state that the Lateran church takes precedence of all other churches. FORCELLA, *Iscrizioni*, 8, 21, n. 31; 25, n. 42. On the Lateran residence, see present work, vol. i. p. 205.

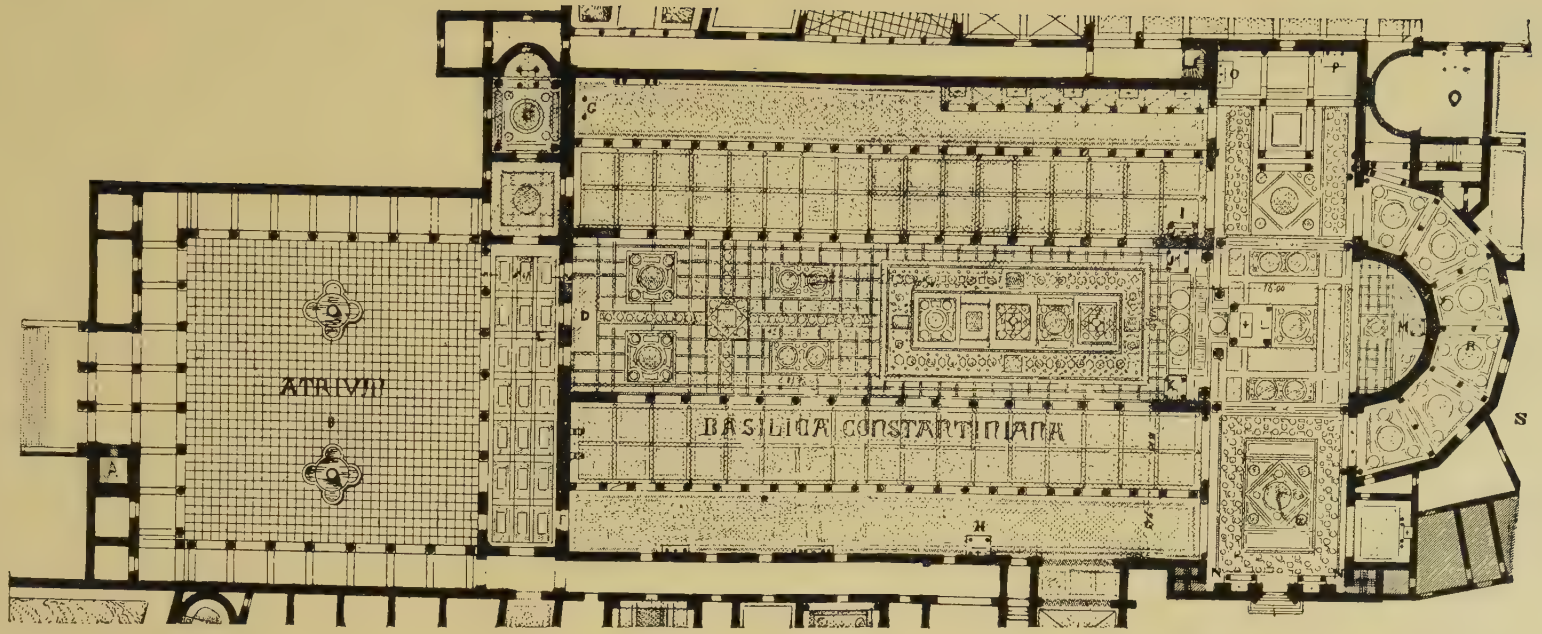
historical site in Rome could be lively enough, and when the Church's Head on earth solemnly performed the Liturgy in the superb Basilica amidst a great concourse of Romans and foreign pilgrims from every quarter of the globe, clad in the variegated vesture of antiquity, no one could have failed to realise that this spot was indeed one of the greatest sanctuaries of mankind and the headquarters of the hierarchy established by Christ.

The buildings surrounding the Basilica, even apart from the grand palace of the Popes, formed almost a little town. The Constantinian Basilica towered above a great number of hostelries for pilgrims, oratories, monasteries, and clergy-houses. The baptistery, with its portico leading to the Oratory of the Cross built by Pope Hilary, flanked the western side, whilst to the east the lofty palace with its courts and porticoes stretched as far as the Aqueducts, which here entered the City from the Roman Campagna; the palace extended as far as the present Scala Santa.

The Basilica "of our Saviour," or Constantinian Basilica, as it was called (Ill. 219)[1] then, as now, had two entrances, one to the right, lying nearest for those who came from the City, and another, the principal one, in the front, where the great **Atrium** formed a square, enclosed by a portico. The apse of the church then, as now, opened towards the east, and so the Pope, when celebrating, faced the people and the rising sun.

Approaching the main, eastern entrance, we would have noticed that the broad staircase leading up to the Atrium was full of beggars awaiting the charity of the Faithful, for the stairs leading to the Basilicas were ever a favourite haunt of the poor. Within the Atrium, where beggars again were a prominent feature, we

[1] ROHAULT DE FLEURY, *Le Latran au moyen-âge*, Pl. 4. In Fleury this plan forms a portion of that of the ancient papal palace, of which the plan is, however, much less certain. The portion of the plan which we reproduce here also marks several details which are mere mediæval additions; for instance, the campanile (A) and several oratories and passages. The portions which chiefly interest us here are those lettered as follows: B, the Cantharus (though originally there can have been but one); C, the porch, with the *Secretarium* shaped like an oratory to the left; D, the main entrance at the eastern end of the church; I–K, the pillars and later columns of the Triumphal Arch; between these two letters was the *Confessio* of Sergius II. (see p. 306); L, high altar, surrounded by the four bronze columns of Constantine (see p. 304); M, the "throne of Pope Silvester" (see p. 302); near N was the entrance used by those coming from the city; R, the later "Leonine" ambulatory; to the right of S belongs the Baptistery (see present work, vol. ii., Ill. 83, an illustration borrowed from this same figure of Rohault de Fleury's).




Ill. 219.—The Lateran Basilica. (Plan, reconstructed.)

should have found the penitents, who, being excluded from the church, implored the intercession of those who entered.[1]

The Faithful pushed their way through the crowd of pious suppliants and curious visitors to one of the spouting fountains (*Canthari*) in the centre of the forecourt, where they dipped their hands in the water to symbolise the inward purity with which they must approach the holy place.[2]

Forty marble pillars formed a framing for this animated scene, spread over the great flagged open space and the four surrounding colonnades of which the pillars upheld the pent-roofs. A straight entablature surmounted their capitals, and the frieze was finely decorated in mosaic. Beyond rose, in all solemnity, the lofty front of the church with its great figures of saints upon a gold ground, seemingly exhorting all who enter to recollection and prayer. It seems probable that the centre-piece of the mosaic was a figure of our Saviour, but nothing positive is known concerning the subject of the mosaic. The present somewhat small bust of Christ seen on the front is merely a late mediæval work.

Five doors faced the newcomer, a large one in the centre, a somewhat lower one on each side, and two still smaller for the side aisles. Many here were wont to kiss the ground or the doorposts before entering. In the covered walk in front of these five doors, and also in the space near the portals but within the church, fenced off by railings and curtains, we should have found other groups of people, who, like those seen previously, were prohibited from advancing further. These were penitents, catechumens, and unbelievers, over whom clerics in minor orders, the so-called *ostiarii* or porters, kept strict watch. The space inside, partitioned off by curtains, was called the Narthex.[3]

[1] Plans and views in ROHAULT DE FLEURY, l.c. Cp. particularly Pl. 4. In HÜBSCH, Pl. 4, n. 4, is a section which is an improvement on the view given ibid. under n. 3 of the ancient church. The best early description is in PANVINIUS, *De septem eccl.*, 106 ff. See also UGONIO, *Stationi*, 37 ff. Cp. IOHANNES DIACONUS, *De eccl. lateran.*, in MABILLON, *Mus. ital.*, 2, 560, and see how DE ROSSI, *Inscr. christ.*, 2, 1, p. 222, shows this work to have been written soon after 1073, enlarged later by John the Deacon under Pope Alexander III., and later still by other authors. It is an uncritical tract, written to extol the Lateran church at the expense of St. Peter's. On the place for penitents, see KRAUS, *Gesch. der christl. Kunst*, 1, 283.

[2] The inscription of Leo I. on the Cantharus of S. Paolo fuori le Mura speaks of the washing of hands (though only of hands); see *Anal. rom.*, 1, 94 ("*ablue fonte manus*"), and PAULINUS NOLAN., *P.L.*, LXI., 850. Cp. TERTULL., *De orat.*, c. 11.

[3] The Atrium must have been as wide as the Basilica, hence the Atrium as given in ROHAULT DE FLEURY, *Le Latran*, Pl. 4, and LANCIANI, *Forma Urbis*, Pl. 37, cannot be the original one.

Before making our way into the interior, let us, however, cast another glance back over the Atrium, and recall a few historical incidents concerning the penitents and the poor of Rome.[1]

516. Here in the Atrium of the Lateran Basilica, on the vigil of Easter, the noble Fabiola, of her own free will, once did **public penance.** She had married again during the lifetime of her Pagan husband, for which act she made reparation, so Jerome says, by putting on the sack-like penitential garb, taking her place among the penitents, and confessing her guilt with many a tear. Her feet were bare, her rich garb partly rent in sign of grief, her head uncovered, and her face she smeared with ashes to spoil its comeliness. St. Jerome adds that the people, the clergy, and the Pope were moved to tears at the sight.[2]

Public penance, as performed by Fabiola, for reasons easy to understand, soon ceased to be the rule, or at least it was no longer practised with the same zeal as in early times. The authorities of the Church began little by little to take into account the aversion of the Faithful for such public demonstration of repentance. Works of satisfaction for sin began more and more to assume a private character and to be performed in secret; indeed, penance had always owed its value to its inwardness. In the seventh century public penance was no longer practised in Rome as it once had been, though the institution still existed. Penitents usually took up their abode in the monasteries. They continued, however, to be excluded from the Sacraments or from the church, and to be assigned various kinds of mortification.

517. Christian **Benevolence** was also, in earlier times, practised far more extensively than in subsequent ages, and nowhere more openly than in the Atrium of the Basilicas.

Paulinus of Nola speaks of the tables at which the noble Roman, Pammachius, once entertained the poor "at the Basilica, in front of the doors of the Atrium and of the steps leading up from the Campus," after which he provided his guests amply

[1] PANVINIUS, 115: "*quinque portae, sed tres praecipuae, media maior, ab utroque latere minores duae.*"

[2] HIERONYM., *Ep.* 73, n. 4 ff.; *P.L.*, XXII., 692: "*tota urbe spectante romana, ante diem Paschae, in basilica quondam Laterani . . . in ordine poenitentium*," &c.

with money and clothing. This was at St. Peter's on the Vatican Hill, and, according to our informant, the occasion of this deed of mercy was the death of Paulina, the daughter of Paula and wife of Pammachius. Yet such liberality, particularly at such places, does not seem to have been exceptional. The same Paulinus, urging his friend Alethius to good works, points out to him the "tables set in the forecourts of the House of the Lord" as the best spot where to exercise his charity.[1]

In the works of the Fathers we hear not only of such pious souls as Pammachius, but also of frivolous persons belonging to the fashionable world, who would fain make as much fuss as possible whenever they spent anything on the poor in front of St. Peter's. They also make it clear that occasionally some of the poor ate and drank with more appetite than wisdom, particularly on the greater feasts, when regular banquets seem to have taken place, in which the well-to-do shared, bringing provisions of their own.[2]

In Milan, Monica, Augustine's saintly mother, with all modesty and humility, and following the ancient custom, brought her "baskets and basins" to the Basilicas on the anniversaries of the martyrs. Nor did her humility fail her when one day a too officious ostiarius refused her admission with her gifts, a fact which is recorded in a letter of St. Augustine. It was in the time of St. Ambrose that, at Milan, exception began to be taken to the old institution of the Agape, owing to the abuses which had crept into the observance and which caused the Bishop to issue stringent regulations against them. This prohibition Monica was compelled to obey.[3]

At Hippo St. Augustine followed in the footsteps of St. Ambrose, and was successful in putting an end to the practice in Africa of holding banquets in front of the churches. He explains that such eating and drinking outside the Basilicas on Saints' Days had at first been permitted out of regard for the numerous recent converts from paganism, who hitherto had been accustomed to celebrate their idolatrous festivals with banquets

[1] PAULIN., *Ep.* 13 *ad Pammachium*, *P.L.*, LXI., 213: "*et intra basilicam et pro ianuis atrii et pro gradibus campi . . . per accubitus.*" On Pammachius, see present work, vol. i. p. 51 f. PAULIN., *Ep.* 34 *ad Alethium; P.L.*, LXI., 344: "*mensa quae proposita est in atriis domus Domini.*"

[2] See above, p. 281.

[3] AUGUSTINE, *Ep. ad Alypium; P.L.*, XXXIII., 118, *Confess.*, 6, c. 2.

and revelry; now, however, the time had come to follow the example of other Churches and cease the custom.

When Augustine penned these words he must have been mindful of the awkward fact that in the City of Rome it had not been found possible to uproot a custom which so easily led to disorder. People there clung too tenaciously to old-world observances. "Some raise the objection," says Augustine, "that cases of drunkenness are daily reported at the Basilica of St. Peter." To this he replies rather lamely that the prohibition existed even in Rome, but that at St. Peter's, which lay so far away from the Papal residence, little heed was paid to it, for lack of strict supervision. The bands of pilgrims, he adds, often brought undesirable elements to St. Peter's, and there were well-intentioned people who, even at this sacred spot, made a point of celebrating their arrival after the evil fashion of their native land.[1]

In the meantime the charitable organisation of the Roman Church was becoming ever better administered and more far-reaching. Under Leo I. we find not only the Feast of the Collection, but also "presidents," on whom the duty devolved of receiving the proceeds of the regular collection and of distributing them to the needy in the different regions of the City. These "presidents" were the deacons. This organisation had for its result the foundation of the City deaconries, with their churches. The deaconries, however, concerned themselves merely with the Church's public charity, and in no wise interfered with the private beneficence of the Faithful, which was exercised everywhere, though more especially in the Basilicas. The Popes further acquired by donation the territories (Patrimonies) of the Roman Church, which enabled them to dispense abundant alms. In documents dealing with the Patrimonies, the Popes styled the poor "our brothers," looking on them as "Christ's own poor," on whose behalf the Lord, our common Father, requires His Faithful to show their brotherly affection."[2]

In the East also the Atrium of the Basilicas was always the rallying-place for suffering in all its forms, and the scene of

[1] AUGUSTINE, *Ep. ad Alypium*: "*de basilica beati apostoli Petri quotidianae vinolentiae proferebantur exempla.*"

[2] LEO M., *Serm.* 11, n. 2, for instance, mentions the *praesidentes*, when making an appeal for the *Collectio*. *Liber diurn.*, ed SICKEL, p. 123, formulary n. 95, on behalf of the Deaconries: "*fratres nostri, Christi pauperes.*"

Christian charity. The man born lame, who lay at the gate of the Temple of Jerusalem, was for all time the natural patron of beggars in every clime. St. Chrysostom, in one of his homilies, instances the rows of beggars, seen every day, sitting in front of the church, and advises his listeners to cleanse their souls by giving alms, just as they attend to their outward cleanliness by washing their hands at the fountain in the forecourt.[1]

It is a curious coincidence that Romans, in Pagan times, had been wont to find the beggars assembled on the steps leading to the temples, whilst basins for purification were seldom wanting in front of the abodes of the gods. For these lustrations use was made of the so-called *perirrhanteria*. Homer mentions such religious purifications in many passages. It was the natural expression of a universal human feeling that one should cleanse oneself before approaching the Supreme Being. The symbolic purification at the church door was something as natural as the custom of giving alms at the spot where the suppliant implores the blessings of Heaven for himself.

It is high time now to conduct our visitor into the Lateran Basilica itself.

## Interior of the Lateran Basilica

518. On entering the nave, the visitor would have found himself in a great forest of columns (Ill. 220).[2]

They divided the vast area of the church into five unequal aisles. The central aisle or nave, with its six-and-thirty enormous marble pillars, exceeded the others both in breadth and height. The somewhat smaller side aisles, next to the nave, and the two still narrower aisles beyond them, were separated by pillars, six-and-forty in number, arranged in two rows. The pillars of the nave were crowned some with Corinthian and some with Ionic capitals, purloined from older buildings, and bearing

[1] CHRYSOST., *De poenit.*, hom. 3, n. 2; *P.G.*, XLIX., 294.

[2] A new drawing by the Roman artist Tabanelli from the original on the wall of the left aisle near the entrance in S. Martino ai Monti. This picture is probably more true to reality than the similar painting, found in the same church, of the interior of Old St. Peter's, for at the time the pictures were painted the Lateran was still unchanged, whereas Old St. Peter's being then no longer in existence, the artist must necessarily have drawn largely on his fancy. Our draughtsman has left in the high Gothic tabernacle of Urban V., and likewise the Gothic lights of the apse and clerestory. He has, however, confined himself to reproducing the main outlines of the picture, which alone are of interest to us here, and thereby given a more distinct idea of the whole than can be obtained from a photograph.

witness, by their unevenness, to the haste with which the Basilica was constructed.

The pillars of the side aisles, though of smaller size, were of more valuable material, being all of that green marble known as verde antico, with capitals of the same stone elegantly chiselled. The green columns may have come from the chief hall of the old mansion of the Laterani. In the Basilica they rested on rather high square bases, for which they had certainly not been made originally.[1]

The grandeur and the quiet harmony of the interior as a whole was, however, scarcely affected by slight discordances in the parts.[2]

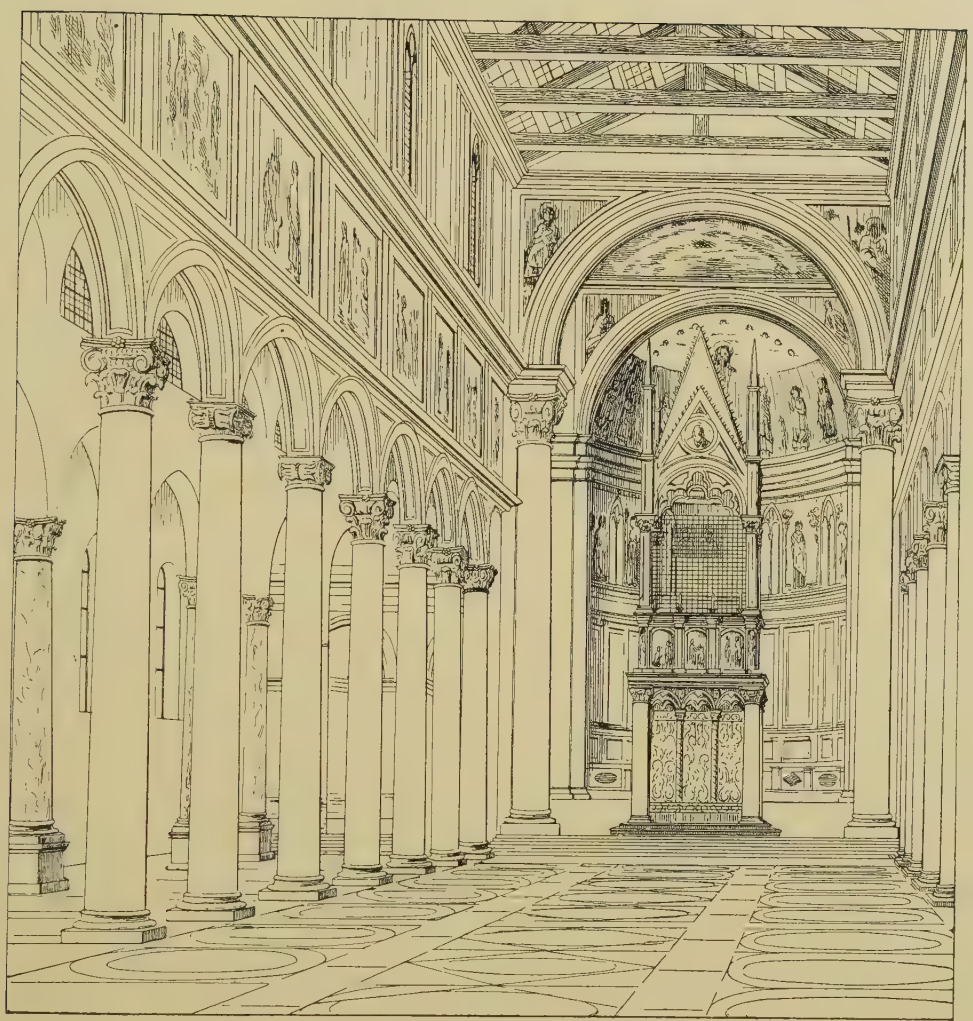
The two giant pillars supporting the Triumphal Arch directed the visitor's eye to the mosaics above. Beyond this might have been seen the Ciborium-altar, and, still farther away, the concha of the apse, with its golden ground, on which a great bust of our Saviour was surrounded by other figures in mosaic.

Among the many details of architecture and ornament attracting our view, we may note the broad transepts opening behind the Triumphal Arch, the airy arches poised above the pillars of the nave, the long line of pictures in their square frames, on the walls above the arches, and the round-arched windows of the clerestory, filled with pierced marble which mellowed the light. Between the windows there were again pictures from sacred history, Old Testament scenes probably alternating with the pictures of their New Testament antitypes, according to the custom then in vogue. There were also round-arched windows in the lesser clerestories of the aisles above the arches supported by the pillars in verde antico.

The roof of the outer aisles sloped outwards and rested on the side walls of the building. Through these walls also, light entered the Basilica through a long line of round-arched windows. The covering of the nave, since the time of Constantine the Great, was a wide-spanned, flat, wooden ceiling. It was embossed all

[1] Ugonio in his day still found seven of the big pillars; the rest had already been enclosed by the pilasters. There were also forty-two small ones, "di pietra verde, laconica, allegra e gratissima all' occhio." Panvinio mentions thirty big pillars, four pilasters, and forty-two small columns "*cum elegantissimis capitulis*."

[2] Another such discordance is pointed out by Dehio (p. 105): "The intercolumnisation of the outer and inner rows of pillars disagrees, betraying a sad lack of symmetry in the original design."



Ill. 220.—The Lateran Basilica.

(Interior as it was formerly. After a picture painted in 1640–1644.)

over with finely wrought gilt shields which shed an exquisite lustre over the whole interior of the Basilica. It may be that it was to this adornment that the church owed its later name of "The Golden Basilica."[1]

At the present day the condition of the Lateran is very different.

Of all the ancient pillars only two are now seen, namely, those in granite which support the Triumphal Arch. During the restoration directed by Borromini, in the pontificate of Innocent X., all the others which yet remained were immured two by two in the twelve massive square pillars of the present church. The pillars of the side aisles of verde antico, to the number of twenty-four, were shortened, and then placed against the new pillars to serve as frames to the statues of the Apostles. Under Leo XIII. even the ancient apse, of which the size was indeed disproportionately small, disappeared to make room for a more spacious one, decorated in modern style. The great nave of the church, which has unfortunately quite lost its basilical stamp, was again, in the time of Pius IV., supplied with a richly panelled ceiling.[2]

Despite the transformation it has undergone, the venerable building has never been shifted from its ancient foundations. Parts of the outer walls may still be Constantinian, although, as early as the end of the ninth century (896), in consequence of an earthquake, and later owing to two fires during the time of the Popes' exile at Avignon, great restorations were undertaken. Very rightly, during the restoration under Innocent X., care was taken to leave exposed, at certain points above the piers of the nave, the walls of the ancient building. These places are now filled by medallions of the prophets.[3]

A clear and tolerably faithful reproduction of the mediæval Basilica is afforded by a mural painting in San Martino ai Monti (Ill. 220).[4]

[1] We must apply to this ceiling what the *Liber pont.* (*Silvester*, n. 36) says of the "*camera ex auro trimita in longum et latum.*" Cp. EUSEB., *Vita Const.*, 3, c. 32, regarding the καμάρα λακωνάρια at the church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. HOLTZINGER, pp. 52, 72, 138. See present work, vol. ii. p. 105, note 3.

[2] The proportions are thus given: Length of nave, 282 feet; width, 52 feet; height of Triumphal Arch, 35 feet; breadth of vestibule, 182 feet; its depth, 29 feet.

[3] On the identity of the building, see ROHAULT DE FLEURY, *Le Latran*, p. 18.

[4] Doulcet had an article on this picture, with a good reproduction, in *Mél. d'archéol. et d'hist.*, 5 (1885), 377 ff., Pl. 14a. Cp. the illustration from Essenwein, in HOLTZINGER, *Die altchr. Baukunst*, 38, fig. 31.

This painting was executed between 1640 and 1644, and, on the whole, shows the state of the Basilica prior to the restoration. From it we can gain some idea of the beauty of the five-aisled church, with its splendid marble pillars. The timbers of the roof are seen minus any ceiling. The early pictures are still resplendent above the arcades of the nave, though the windows of the clerestory and those of the apse have now been provided with pointed arches. In front of the presbyterium, at the top of the steps, rises the superb Gothic pillared tabernacle of Urban V., behind which may be seen the marble balustrade of the apse. On the other hand, the screen across the nave, forming the square enclosure of the *Schola cantorum*, and likewise the *Ambones*, have both disappeared.[1]

The "Mother of all Churches" had thus to experience many vicissitudes in the course of her age-long career.

519. Until the apse was removed under Leo XIII. to make way for a new one, it had almost escaped notice that a great part of the earliest work was still preserved in the mosaic (Ill. 221).[2] Eugène Müntz, who by his researches among the monuments of Roman art has deserved so well, was the first to point this out.[3]

The fine, majestic bust of Christ, which occupies the centre, must have been there from the beginning, whilst, below, the figures of the Blessed Virgin, of the Baptist, and of the Apostles Peter, Paul, John, and Andrew, seem to belong to the earlier composition. The gorgeously decorated cross in the middle may also belong to the original picture; it stands on a hill, whence flow the four mystic streams. The figures of St. Francis and of St. Anthony, on the contrary, were inserted in their places amidst the other saints by Nicholas IV.

When this Pope reconstructed the apse in the thirteenth century, he must have left intact all the principal figures, and we have even the express testimony of an inscription that the fine head of Christ was never interfered with. The broad,

[1] On the Ambones, see PANVINIUS, 119: "*duo marmorea pulpita, quemadmodum sunt in basilica S. Mariae Maioris, S. Pauli, SS. Cosmae et Damiani, et in omnibus Urbis basilicis.*"

[2] From a sketch made previous to the last "restoration."

[3] *Revue archéol.*, 1878, II., 273, and 1879, II., 109: *Des éléments antiques dans les mosaïques romaines du moyen-âge.*

Ill. 221.—The Mosaic of the Apse in the Lateran Basilica.

lower border of the picture, with its idyllic scenery, was also spared.[1]

On this rich border we perceive a picture quite typically antique, formed of cheerful river scenes, with graceful boys and sportive monsters of the deep. Right and left little naked genii are emptying water from shell-shaped vases, the two streams becoming the river to which is given the name IORDANES. On the pleasant waters naked winged urchins are angling with rods and nets, or sailing amidst swans and fishes; others disport themselves on the bank among flowers and birds.[2]

The scene is quite in the style of that still preserved in the lower border of the mosaic in the apse of Sta. Maria Maggiore and of the lost mosaics on the cupola of Sta. Costanza, of which we have sketches.[3]

The latter church, which stands near the Basilica of St. Agnes on the *Via Nomentana*, had received its mosaic decoration, some of which still remains, during the Constantinian period. In this circular building, which, though now known as Sta. Costanza, was in the fourth century the Imperial mausoleum, and then a baptistery, the whole lower border within the cupola was peopled, even more thickly than the similar border in the churches just mentioned, with frolicsome winged genii sporting in a river. Amongst other diversions, they were chasing swans and casting harpoons at marine animals as large as themselves.

What favourites such scenes were in classic antiquity is proved by the heathen mausoleums with their genii in marble, plaster, or painting, engaged in pastoral toil or pleasures. It is also seen in the early imitations of this manner of decoration, especially in Constantine's time, even on Christian sarcophagi. A heathen mosaic at Constantine in Algeria, for instance, showing

[1] See metrical inscription in FORCELLA, *Iscrizioni*, 8, 15, n. 16. It begins: "*Tertius ecclesiae pater*," and of the head of Christ it says: "*Quo fuerat steteratque situ relocatur eodem.*" PANVINIUS, 114. Illustrations of the whole mosaic, previous to the rebuilding under Leo XIII., in FORTUNA, *Chiese*, 6, Pl. 1, and excellent coloured ones in DE ROSSI, *Musaici*, though with no explanations. Under Leo XIII. the ancient mosaic was taken to pieces, and put together again in the new apse. As to whether sufficient attention was paid to the Pope's injunctions to preserve the ancient character of the work is a matter which cannot be dealt with here. See DUCHESNE, *Liber pont.*, 1, 191, note 28.

[2] On the symbolic meaning of the Jordan, see HEUSER, *Realencykl. für chr. Alterth.*, 2, 21. In the *Clavis* ascribed to Melito, we read: "*Iordanis . . . baptismi figuram habens.*" Ed. PITRA, *Spicileg. Solesmense*, 3, 297.

[3] The lost pictures from S. Costanza, in GARRUCCI, Pl. 204, from the sketch-book of Francisco d'Ollanda in the Escurial. See present work, vol. ii. pp. 129, 145.

the triumph of Neptune, contains some striking parallels to the river scenes in the mosaic of the Lateran Basilica.[1]

Having supported our case by comparison with Sta. Costanza, and the other monuments, we may well venture to push the date of the mosaic in the Constantinian church of the Lateran even further back than does Müntz. This investigator stopped short at about the fifth century; the mosaic might, however, quite well belong to the fourth century, and to the time of Constantine's family.

The inscription of Flavius Constantius Felix, Consul in 428, which once existed in the apse, presents no great difficulty. It spoke of an unspecified decoration, executed by him and his wife Padusia, at that sacred spot. This was thought to refer to the mosaic itself, but as the inscription stood immediately above the Papal throne at the back of the apse (*in throno*), as the careful copyist to whom we owe the information remarks in the ninth century, it should refer either to the throne itself or to some marble work on the wall in the neighbourhood, and not to the mosaic high up in the concha of the apse.[2]

The Papal throne used in the Middle Ages is still shown in the present transept as the "Throne of St. Silvester." The throne is certainly mediæval and not early Christian, but its seat is a splendid ancient marble stool dating from the best classic period long before Silvester. This marble stool may well have been used by Pope Silvester, but of this nothing is known; it may also be that the decoration carried out by Constantius Felix consisted in bestowing some unknown adornment on this article of furniture.[3]

520. To return for a moment to the remarkable portrait of Christ in the apse (Ill. 222).[4] In the eleventh and twelfth cen-

[1] The Neptune scenes, in DELAMARE, *Exploration scientifique de l'Algérie; Archéologie*, Pl. 139 ff.

[2] The inscription, in DE ROSSI, *Inscr. christ.*, 2, 1, pp. 149, 307. DUCHESNE, *Liber pont.*, 1, 241; 2, 236. *Anal. rom.*, 1, 480.

[3] For the throne now standing in the Lateran cloister, see ROHAULT DE FLEURY, *Latran*, Pl. 22, 23. On the semicircle of the apse round the throne, PANVINIUS, 119: "*hemicyclum e nobilissimo marmore sectis tabulis incrustatum.*" The wall of the apse is similarly ornamented in Sta. Agnese, SS. Nereo ed Achilleo, and in other early churches of Rome.

[4] A photo taken long ago by Parker. As this is the only known photograph of the famous figure of Christ taken previous to the restoration, and as the negatives of Parker's whole collection of photographs of the monuments of ancient and mediæval Rome were unfortunately destroyed in a fire, our reproduction is of considerable interest. Regarding

Ill. 222.—Upper Portion of the Mosaic of the Apse in the Lateran Basilica. Christ as Portrayed in Constantine's Time.

turies, it was believed to be the earliest portrait of our Saviour publicly exhibited in Rome. If it really dates from Constantine or Silvester, then the tradition may well be accepted, for it is by no means unlikely that the features of the Saviour of the World, depicted according to the ideas then in vogue, were first displayed in monumental fashion to half heathen Rome, on the holiest spot of the great Christian church near the Lateran.

The portrait, in spite of its restorations, still retains the noble, and yet perfectly reposeful, expression with which antiquity stamped it. It shows nothing of the severity and rigidity usual in the later Byzantine figures of Christ. The mosaic tesseræ of which it was originally composed were somewhat large, and the smaller ones found in the nimbus were due to later restorations. Everything showed the care with which past ages had treated this venerable likeness.

About the thirteenth century a curious legend attached itself to this picture.

In the twelfth century, John the Deacon, in his description of the Lateran Church, simply voiced the tradition of his time, stating that this was the first portrait of Christ placed in a public building of Rome. This, however, did not satisfy those who came later. Towards the end of the thirteenth century, in the time of Nicholas IV. († 1292), who restored the apse, the author of the dedicatory inscription inserted at this restoration, speaks in it of the miraculous apparition of the likeness; according to him it had sprung from the wall at the dedication of the Basilica by Silvester.[1]

Parker's other photographs reproduced in the present work, we may well call attention to their rarity; many objects which have entirely disappeared in the modern "improvement" of the City are now known only through his work.

[1] IOHANNES DIACONUS, in MABILLON, *Mus. ital.*, 2, 562: "*imago . . . primum visibilis omni populo romano apparuit.*" Similarly, the Lateran lectionary, now lost, but quoted by Crescimbeni, *Stato della chiesa later. nel ann.* 1723, p. 156, a work compiled at about the same period, says: "*imago . . . primum visibiliter omni populo romano apparuit.*" Even in the verses of Nicholas IV. in the Lateran referred to above (p. 301, note 1), we find simply: "*Postremoque prima Dei veneranda refulsit | Visibus humanis facies.*" Crescimbeni, the most ardent defender of the miracle, has to confess that these three texts, the only ones surviving, give no explicit support to the tradition of a miracle, "mentre anche ciò che dal pittore vien dipinto, si può dire che apparisca agli occhi de' riguardanti." Nevertheless the inscription, which ran round below the mosaic of the apse restored by Nicholas IV., said in its second portion: "*sacrum vultum salvatoris integrum reponi fecit in loco, ubi primo* miraculose *populo romano apparuit, quando fuit ista ecclesia consecrata.*" FORCELLA, 8, 14, n. 14. It remains to be seen whether this second part was not added later still, as the other inscription of Nicholas IV., containing the list of the holy things (*sanctuaria*) of the Lateran church, has no allusion to the picture (ibid., n. 15). The whole inscription has now been "restored."

It is to the exuberant fancy of the same period that we owe the extraordinary inscription, ascribing to the Lateran church the possession of certain celebrated relics which long since, even in the Lateran itself, have come to be regarded as mere creations of the mediæval mind. These relics are the ark of the Covenant, the two tables of the Law, the staff of Moses, Aaron's rod, the seven-branched golden candlestick, and the golden pot with manna from the wilderness. All these articles, and many other secret treasures, were, so we are told, brought by "Titus and Vespasian" from Jerusalem, and, later on, concealed beneath the altar of St. Silvester. The inscription even finds a proof of the fact of these relics having been brought to Rome, in the scene of the triumphal procession on the Arch of Titus (see present work, Vol. I., Ill. 17).[1]

521. Between the apse and the altar of the Lateran Basilica stood four lofty Corinthian bronze-gilt pillars, said to have been erected by Constantine.

At any rate they were extremely old, as also was the custom of erecting isolated pillars in, or in front of, sanctuaries, where they stood like so many sentinels. In the forecourt of Solomon's Temple were two pillars, called Jachin and Booz. The Phœnicians had two similar columns in the Temple of Baalsami at Tyre. The above inscription, already alluded to as having been placed there in the time of Nicholas IV., even states concerning the four bronze pillars of the Lateran, that they had been brought to Rome by Titus with the other trophies from the Holy Land.[2]

The two pairs of pillars repeatedly changed their position during the Middle Ages. At present they are standing, in only slightly altered form, at the side altar of the Blessed Sacrament erected by Clement VIII. beneath the so-called Table of the Last Supper.[3]

The original Constantinian altar of the Basilica had its place

[1] FORCELLA, 8, 14, n. 15. Cp. vol. i. p. 97, note 3.

[2] PANVINIUS, 118: "*quattuor miri operis columnae corinthio aere et opere fabricatae.*" Ugonio (p. 42) mentions that the pillars were full of stones and broken tiles, "che dicono essere di Terra Santa." DE ROSSI, *Bull. arch. crist.*, 1882, p. 142, upon the pillars (3 Kings vii. 21) from Jerusalem and other similar ones, with an illustration of a painted glass in the Vatican Museum, showing the pillars in the Jewish Temple.

[3] PANVINIUS (p. 118) informs us that they formerly stood "*paulo ante absidem.*" There he saw them "*a laeva sinistraque altaris.*" For their place in an engraving of the year 1508 in the Lateran archives, see DOULCET, *Mél. d'arch. et d'hist.*, 5 (1885), 380.

beneath the Triumphal Arch, and in front of it the Emperor had two big candelabra (*phara canthara*) set up, one of gold and the other of silver. The altar was surmounted by a gorgeous pillared tabernacle or canopy of beaten silver. After this had disappeared, probably during one of the sacks the City had to experience, Xystus III. had a new tabernacle executed, in which work he was greatly assisted by the munificence of Valentinian III. No less than 2000 lbs. of silver were used in making it; we may assume that the new structure, like its predecessor, was ornamented with metal-work either hammered or cast. The principal figure, as was fitting in a church dedicated to St. Saviour, was Christ our Lord, shown seated on a throne, surrounded by the twelve Apostles.[1]

Although this altar, agreeably with early custom, was the only one in the Basilica, yet we read that Constantine had, at the same time, ordered seven smaller silver altar-tables to be prepared. No doubt they were intended to supplement the high altar, near which they were placed.

For the making of each of these altars, 200 lbs. of silver were required; they were probably so placed as to extend into the aisles, which on great occasions were filled with Faithful, who, like those in the nave, were accustomed to bring their offerings of bread and wine. These offerings were most likely deposited on the side-altars; as there were seven "Deacons of the Apostolic See," we may suppose that there was one to attend to each of these tables, and to the *oblatae* and *scyphi* upon it.[2]

Seven *scyphi* (vessels for wine) and seven *patenae* (plates for bread) are named also in the ancient inventories as having been among Constantine's donations to the Lateran. There were also seven brazen candlesticks. The exact object of these gifts is not specified, but their sevenfold number leads us to the conclusion that they were for use at the seven silver altars.

John the Deacon, a learned Roman, writes in the sixth century that it was an ancient custom in the City (hence certainly a custom at the Pope's own church in the Lateran) to dress seven altars on Holy Saturday; he does not, however, explain the reason of this

[1] Valentinian's tabernacle, *Liber pont.*, I, 233, *Xystus III.*, n. 64. Constantine's tabernacle, ibid., I, 172, *Silvester*, n. 36: "*fastidium argenteum battutilem, qui habet in fronte Salvatorem*," &c.

[2] DUCHESNE, *Liber pont.*, I, 191, note 33. Our early authorities mention the existence of seven altars only in the case of the Lateran Basilica.

practice. In the absence of any information we shall, however, be justified if we surmise that the practice stood in some connection with the seven altars of Constantine and with the sevenfold number of the deacons and regions of Rome.[1]

By the sixth century, moreover, the ancient custom of each church having but one altar no longer obtained in Rome. Even earlier, in the fourth and the fifth centuries, other altars were to be found in adjoining oratories, and in the sixth century such altars made their way into the church itself. In a letter despatched in 596 by Gregory the Great to Santo (*Saintes*) in Gaul, a church of the neighbourhood is mentioned, which had no fewer than thirteen altars, of which four had, however, not yet been consecrated by burial of relics of the martyrs; the Pope was, accordingly, sending relics of four saints for the purpose of this consecration to the Bishop interested.[2]

The altar of the Lateran Basilica had at first no real *Confessio*, *i.e.* no hollow shaft beneath the altar, such as we find in other Basilicas where the bodies of martyrs remain in their original resting-place. The church of the Lateran was not a sepulchral church like St. Peter's and St. Paul's, or San Lorenzo, Sta. Agnese, and others, a circumstance which accounts for the apparent exception. Sergius II. († 847) is the first of whom we hear that he "created a Confession in the Lateran Basilica, and consecrated it, depositing relics with his own hands." [3]

This same Pope also carried out some improvements in the vestibule of the church, which some chose to refer to the Scala Santa which now stands close to the Lateran, and which, according to an opinion popular in the last few centuries, had been used by our Saviour in the house of Pilate at the time of the Passion. Did the statement concerning Sergius really refer to this, then it would certainly be most interesting. As a matter of fact, however, it refers to something quite different. Reading it carefully, we see that, some time before the pontificate of Pope Sergius, the porch immediately in front of the church doors had been largely walled in, probably to strengthen the structure. The effect of this was, however, to conceal the doors and the threshold of the sacred fane. Sergius accordingly rebuilt the porch and removed

[1] Iohannes Diaconus, *Ep. ad Senarium;* Mabillon, *Mus. Ital.*, 2, p. c.; *P.L.*, LIX., 402. John lived in Rome in Theodoric's time.
[2] *Registr.*, 6, n. 48 (Maur., 6, n. 49).
[3] *Liber pont.*, 2, 91, n. 489.

Ill. 223.—The Emperor Justinian I. with his Votive Offering.

(Mosaic in Ravenna.)

the offending wall. The *Liber pontificalis* says that he restored to the view of all the sacred threshold (*sacra limina*) which had formerly been hidden. It is quite clear that any attempt to read into these words the discovery of the Scala Santa is doomed to failure.[1]

Moreover, a small portion of this porch, the corner to the left on entering, remained closed—perhaps, indeed, never had been open. This was the spot (Ill. 219 at G) occupied by the *Secretarium* or *Sacrarium*, later on known as the Sacristy.[2]

522. The *Secretarium* at St. Peter's was also at the same spot. Gregory the Great was buried in the forecourt of the Vatican Basilica in the passage in front of the left corner of the portico, and our authorities always speak of his burial-place as "in front of the *Secretarium*."[3]

In the halls here, which also served for the custody of articles used in the services, Synods were sometimes held. There on special occasions, like other bishops in their churches, the Pope received the greetings of distinguished laymen. It was there too that he and his attendants usually assembled *ad procedendum, i.e.* to make their solemn entry into the church for the liturgy.[4]

From thence, too, under escort of the clergy, started the processions bringing costly votive offerings to the high altar. It was nothing unusual to see stately pageants of foreign envoys, sent by sovereigns, nobles, or bishops from every region, proceeding up the Papal Cathedral Church, or St. Peter's of the Vatican, bearing such offerings in silver or gold to adorn the altar or its neighbourhood.

## Votive Offerings—Vows

523. In all the Basilicas of Rome, the votive offerings which the house of God owed to the liberality of the Faithful, and which were frequently mementoes of pious vows made during difficulties

[1] Ibid.: "*sacra pridem quae latebant populis limina summo studio omnibus manifesta constituit, cum pulchri decoris ibidem arcos a fundamentis constituit*," &c.

[2] PANVINIUS, 115. This *Secretarium* was generally called the Oratory of St. Thomas and from it one of the five doors (the last on the left) led direct into the Basilica.

[3] *Liber pont.*, 1, 312, n. 113.

[4] On the reception of the laity ("*filii ecclesiae*") at Ravenna, see GREG., *Registr.*, 3, n. 54 (3, n. 56).

public or private, were exposed in the vicinity of the altar, particularly on the Pergula, when there was one.

How donations of value were offered to the Basilicas by persons of high rank may be best seen at the present day upon two large mosaics at Ravenna, one of which appears upon the accompanying illustration (Ill. 223).[1] It is in the church of San Vitale, upon a wall near the apse, and represents the Emperor Justinian I., escorted by two courtiers and several guards. He is wearing a magnificent chlamys, and, besides his crown, is provided with a circular nimbus. The Emperor holds in his hands a golden paten, or salver, studded outside with gems. Beside the Emperor stands Maximian, Archbishop of Ravenna, bearing a cross, and attended by two deacons, of whom one holds the book of the Gospels, and the other a thurible. No less significant historically, and archæologically, is the mosaic on the opposite wall, on which Theodora, Justinian's consort, brings her votive offering in the form of a large chalice (*scyphus*), also adorned with precious stones. She is in the act of entering the church from the atrium, of which we see the cantharus, with its gushing water, whilst a cleric raises the curtain at the entrance.[2]

Ill. 224.—A Portion of Heraclida's Votive Offering.

It is worth while glancing at a few of the earliest votive-gifts found in Rome, some of which are still in existence, as their

[1] The Emperor has a round nimbus in token of his earthly rank. On the pallium worn by Archbishop Maximian (whose name appears behind), see present work, vol. ii. p. 295, note 1. On the vestments of the clergy, the tunic, dalmatic (of the deacon), planet, and on the attire of the courtiers, see *Anal. rom.*, 1, 12, No. 4–10. On the shield borne by the soldiers to the left is the monogram, ☧ which is, however, scarcely discernable in our picture.

[2] Garrucci, Pl. 264. In Dahn, *Urgesch.*, 1, 178, 326, there are two excellent large-size illustrations of the scenes with Justinian and with Theodora.

inscriptions afford us a glimpse into a manifestation of piety which once appealed deeply to all good Christians.

In the garden near SS. Silvestro e Martino was found, in 1632, a silver pendant, shaped like a basket, on which was the inscription "To St. Silvester, his maid fulfils her vow," proving it to be a gift offered at the shrine of Pope **Silvester**. It is noteworthy that the donor called herself the servant (*ancilla*) of the Saint. The offering, of fine filigree work, was a gabata, to hold lights, and must belong to about the fifth century. From the same period comes a chalice found near Rome with the inscription: "I asked and I received, I have performed my vow." In our illustration 224, we show what now remains of another votive gift offered by a certain Bishop **Heraclida**—perhaps a Roman pilgrim—to some sanctuary in or near Rome. It probably belongs to the fourth century, and consists of a bronze tablet hanging on a chain. Upon it is written in silver letters, "Heraclida, Bishop and servant of God made [the gift]."[1]

Ill. 225.—Votive Offering of Zenovius.

The bronze tablet of another votive offering, rich in gold and precious stones, has also defied time. It hails from **Carnuntum** in northern Pannonia, was perhaps brought to Rome about the same time, and has a metrical inscription. It tells us in two distichs that the people of Carnuntum have sent the gift to the "sublime tables"—*i.e.* to the altars—and that the name of the venerable Mandronius (the bearer) should be accounted of more

[1] On the gabata of St. Silvester, see present work, vol. ii. p. 166, note 3. The inscription runs: ☧ SANCTO SILVESTRIO ANCILLA SVA VOTVM SOLVIT. The chalice with the inscription ✠ PETIBI ET ACCIPI VOTVM SOLVI is quoted by DE ROSSI, *Bull. arch. crist.*, 1872, p. 38, from MAI, *Scriptorum veterum biblioth.*, 5, p. 198, 1. The bronze tablet, now the property of Count Basilewski, is figured in DE ROSSI, ibid., 1871, p. 65 ff., and Pl. V., n. 1.

value than gold or gems. Mandronius was no doubt the Bishop of this distant region. Judging by the remains, it would seem that a gabata or chandelier originally hung from the tablet. In connection with this offering, sent from a spot which is now in Hungary, an early Christian votive gift found in Transylvania, and described by de Rossi, may be mentioned. It, too, is a metal tablet, to which some article, most probably a lamp, hung by means of a pierced monogram of Christ. It bears the simple inscription: "I, **Zenovius**, have fulfilled my vow" (Ill. 225).[1]

524. The Roman soil has yielded many a marble votive inscription. They are not always so explicit as that of the sixth century, which may still be read in the Basilica of **St. Peter ad Vincula**, where the donor, Severus the presbyter *a vinculis sancti Petri*, modestly intimates that the frame of his offering, of which we know nothing, is made of cedar-wood. These texts on marble sometimes give us no inkling of the character of the offering. Frequently the donors may simply have given money towards the expense of building or decorating some part of the church.[2]

About the year 1869 a marble inscription was unearthed near the now demolished church of **Sta. Bonosa**, in the Trastevere, which speaks of a donation given by a certain Deusdedit to an unnamed "holy place." Might this holy place have been the house of Bonosa, transformed into an Oratory? At any rate the house of this pious Roman lady is thought to have stood on this site. The inscription, belonging to the fifth or sixth century, would be a very important witness for the traditions associated with the church of Sta. Bonosa, if it really belonged to the spot where it was found, but unfortunately this is by no means certain. Many inscriptions, and countless other marble remains, have travelled far before reaching the spot where they were found in modern times. One peculiarity of this votive tablet is the palm

[1] Votive offering of Carnuntum (Petronella), in DE ROSSI, *Bull. arch. crist.*, 1877, p. 12 ff. A small figure of the tablet, now in the Lateran Museum, in *Triplice omaggio*, &c., Pl. 1, n. 10. The inscription as completed by de Rossi runs: "*[Quo]d gens Carnuntum m[ensis] sublimibus offert,* | *[N]on auro aut gemmis sit ca[rum], at titulo.* | *[Nam] quod Mandroni venerando nomine fulget* | *Maius ydaspeo munere suspicitur.*" The inscription from Transylvania, EGO ZENOVIVS VOTVM POSVI, in DE ROSSI, ibid., 1871, p. 66, with Pl. VI., n. 1; 1891, p. 143, with Pl. IX.

[2] The above quoted inscription from S. Pietro in Vincoli in my *Anal. rom.*, 1, 152, with Pl. 2 (n. 3), concludes: VRBICLVS CEDRINVS EST.

branch, symbolising triumph and joy, set near the word *feliciter*, which here signifies either the happy fulfilment of the vow, or the attainment of the object desired.[1]

Among the Papal votive offerings we must mention the donation of **Pelagius II.** to St. Peter's. It consisted of a chandelier, or other ornament in costly metal for the Altar of the Apostle, and its metrical inscription was copied there in the ninth century. From the wording of the latter it appears that it was a solemn votive offering from the Pope "and the faithful people" for the health of the Emperor Mauritius and his son, especially to obtain a happy reign, undisturbed by war. We feel ourselves carried back to the horrors of the Lombard War, when we read in the verses the prayer that Peter by his might may everywhere rout the foe. Among royal gifts, we have already mentioned the corona set with gems sent to St. Peter's by Chlodovec, the converted King of the Franks; also the rich gifts to the same shrine of Theodoric and of Justinian I., as well as the gold cross of the Emperor Justin II. (vol. ii., Ill. 131), still preserved in the Vatican Basilica. In the similar collection of valuables preserved in the Lateran church were, among other treasures, the *cymelia episcopii*, of which we hear under Pope Severinus.[2]

The text of an Imperial votive inscription of the fifth century in San Pietro in Vincoli has also come down to us, in which Theodosius the Younger, Eudocia, her husband, and also Eudoxia testify that they have fulfilled their vow. We also know the votive inscription placed in 425 by Placidia, her son Valentinian III., and her daughter Honoria in the Roman **Church of the Holy Cross** ("in Jerusalem"). The most remarkable of all these inscriptions is, however, a tablet of Palombino marble with a bas-relief of the fourth century. The relief displays a female figure with open book between two Saints or Apostles. She seems to represent the unknown Saint to whom the gift was dedicated, probably a Roman Saint, since the stone was found

[1] DE ROSSI, *Bull. arch. crist.*, 1870, p. 33, with Pl. III., n. 3. The faulty inscription says briefly: EGO DEVSDEDET AMATOR LOCI SANTI BOTVM FECIT FELICITER.

[2] On Pelagius II., see DE ROSSI, *Inscr. christ. urbis Romæ*, 2, 1, p. 145. DUCHESNE, *Liber pont.*, 1, 310. The donor prays: "*Ut romana manu coelesti sceptra regantur | Sit quorum imperio libera vera fides . . . Hostibus ut domitis Petri virtute per orbem | Gentibus ac populis pax sit et ista (?) fides.*" On Chlodovec and Theodoric, see present work, vol. ii. p. 252. On Justinian I., ibid. On Justin II., ibid., p. 169 f. "*Cymelia episcopii*," *Liber pont.*, 1, 328, n. 122.

in Rome. The inscription merely says: "Ligurius has performed his vow," VOTVM SOLVIT.[1]

525. So common is the formula VOTVM SOLVIT, that it is found in all the three votive inscriptions in prose which have come to us from the Vatican Basilica through copies in the early pilgrim guide-books.

As all know, vows were already in use among the heathen, and this very formula, VOTVM SOLVIT, appears on many heathen inscriptions. MAXIMIANVS VOTVM SOLVIT, for instance, stands beneath a representation of Diana with her dog, preserved in Vienna. We have even inscriptions recording heathen vows in full. For instance, the god would be told: "If thou wilt protect the people of the Quirites, and grant prosperity to the house of Augustus, we vow to offer thee . . ."[2]

From Theodoret we learn that, even in his day, Christian sanctuaries were wont to receive, among other votive offerings, models of different parts of the human frame, for the healing of which a person now returned thanks. The same custom also obtained among the heathen, and was there carried to extremes. In and near Rome, between the years 1876 and 1889, during that busy period of building, no less than five different heaps of Pagan votive figures were discovered. They were found near temples particularly revered by the superstitious, usually in certain substructures or vaults, the so-called *favissae*, where such objects were stored when the walls of the temple became overcrowded. Among many small clay figures representing the deities worshipped were hundreds of imitations of the various members of the human body, some of which, though interesting from a medical point of view, might have been objected to on the score of public decency.[3]

[1] The inscription by Theodosius, &c., is in DE ROSSI, *Bull. arch. crist.*, 1872, p. 37: "*Theodosius pater, Eudocia cum coniuge votum | Cumque suo supplex Eudoxia nomine solvit.*" The inscription of Placidia, &c., in DE ROSSI, *Inscr. christ.*, 2, 1, p. 435, n. 107: "*Reges terrae et omnes populi, principes et omnes iudices terrae laudent nomen Domini. Sanctae ecclesiae Hierusalem Valentinianus, Placidia et Honoria Augusti, votum solverunt.*" The Palombino bas-relief, in DE ROSSI, *Bull. arch. crist.*, 1872, p. 36 ff., with Pl. 1. Inscription: LYGYRIVS VOTVM SOLVIT.

[2] Maximian's inscription, in the Vienna Cabinet of Coins and Antiques, in DE ROSSI, ibid. Such vows are found among the Arval inscriptions, *e.g. Corp. inscr. lat.*, VI., n. 2025.

[3] THEODORET (*Sermo* 8 *de martyribus*) mentions eyes, feet, and hands in gold and silver. On the *favissae* and their contents, cp. LANCIANI, *Pagan and Christian Rome*, p. 58 ff., who was present when they were brought to light.

In 1876 one of these *favissae* was opened on the site of the former Temple of Hercules, in the present cemetery of the *Campus Veranus;* in 1885 a second was exhumed beneath the former Temple of Diana on the lake of Nemi, in the celebrated *Artemisium Nemorense*. The third collection, consisting of whole strata of similar Pagan votive gifts, came to light during the river improvements in 1886, on both sides of the Tiber Island; they hailed from the island Temple of Æsculapius, where people were wont to seek cure through dreams. In this case, instead of being stored in vaults, they had been sunk in the river on each side of the tiny island.[1]

Another heap of curious votive objects was yielded in 1887 by the quondam Temple of Minerva Medica—not the majestic structure miscalled by this name still existing in the ancient Licinian gardens, but a smaller temple, long since destroyed, to this goddess, named in Greek Athene Hygieine, which once stood at the junction of the Via Merulana with the street anciently called after Minerva Medica. The Pagan Romans resorted to it, amongst other things, to promote the growth of their hair, and Minerva's hair-restoring power meets with due recognition in the grateful inscriptions of the votive tablets preserved. Lastly, in the Temple of Juno, at Veji, in 1889, new discoveries began of similar small votive offerings at a spot where even under Alexander VII. excavations had been carried out with conspicuous success. As regards the situation of the building, recent investigations have proved that the temple stood on the citadel of the ancient Veientines.[2]

It is surprising to find votive inscriptions upon heathen lamps in bronze or precious metal, which show that the gift was intended to burn before the statue or shrine of some god in gratitude for blessings received, just as we are accustomed to see lights burning before Christian pictures or shrines. The heathen even placed lights in the public streets to the honour of their gods. Walking at night through the City of Rome in

[1] The actual spot of the Campus Veranus is at the so-called Pincietto, below which is the Cemetery of Cyriaca. The inscription on an *ara* there is in *Corp. inscr. lat.*, VI., n. 1503. In the Temple of Diana, overlooking the Lake of Nemi, at the spot known as Le Mole, excavations were proceeding with good results even lately. On the Tiber Isle, sacred to Æsculapius, remains are still to be seen of the boat-shaped enclosure given in antiquity to the whole. They are found at the back, and may be identified by the bull's head and the snake.

[2] Veji, near Isola.

Pagan times, we should have noticed at every cross-road the little temples or *aediculae*, each with its lights, which were dedicated to the *Lares Compitales*, the titular deities of the public roads. These little temples, from the time of the Emperor Augustus, who favoured them in the improvements he carried out in the City, were twice a year decked with flowers, yet another custom resembling the Christian one of adorning at certain seasons the chapels or sacred statues in the streets or squares with floral tributes.

526. After what we have already had occasion to say elsewhere, it is superfluous to observe that such agreement in no way justifies any criticism of Catholic customs. On the contrary, in the observances, both of heathen and Christian, we can only recognise the perfectly legitimate and reasonable desire of mankind to honour the supreme and invisible Being by the symbolism of offerings and adornments from the visible world.

Such outward correspondence with the customs of ancient Pagan Rome only serve to demonstrate anew the catholicity of Christian Rome, and to make yet clearer that, besides being Divine, the New Religion was also essentially human.

The deep abyss which yawned between both creeds was perceptible to all, and the solemn services which we are now about to study clearly impressed all concerned with the elevation and profoundness of the New Faith as opposed to the folly which had hitherto held the world in thrall. We allude to the ceremony of initiation by which heathen converts were admitted into the family of the Faithful and into the mysteries of Christianity. No greater contrast could be imagined than that existing between the already described ceremony of admission into the once most popular form of idolatry, *i.e.* the religion of Mithra,[1] and the manner in which fresh converts were received into the bosom of the Church. It will be an appropriate conclusion to our brief review of certain phases of the liturgy and religious life of Rome to dwell a little on the preliminaries of Baptism and its solemn administration. The "Close of the Ancient World" with which this book deals, is, so to speak, focussed here. It is the transition from an expiring world to a world born anew, from death to life, the "*transitus*

[1] See above, p. 114 ff.

*maris rubri*," as the early Liturgy called it, from the Egyptian bondage of olden time to the freedom of the redeemed children of God, a transition effected, not by a filthy baptism in blood, but by a new birth through the Spirit.

## The Admission into the Church of Converts from Paganism (Initiatio Christiana)—Preparation for Baptism

527. The Catechumenate in the sixth century was no longer organised as it had been in an earlier age. The circumstance that there were no longer so many adult converts as at first, and, on the other hand, the far greater number of children brought into the Church by Baptism, involved an alteration of the ancient rules regarding preparation for Baptism. In spite of this the customs observed even then bore the stamp of a most venerable antiquity, and were both complex and profoundly significant.

They are principally known to us through the seventh Roman "Ordo," *i.e.* the so-called Rule of Scrutiny of the Roman Church, which also contains information regarding the solemn Easter Baptism. This Ordo belongs, in its main features, to the sixth century.[1]

In the Gelasian Sacramentary we possess, moreover, a fifth-century compilation of rubrics and prayers which had probably been but little changed in the following century. In the so-called Gregorian Sacramentary, on the contrary, both the preparation and the actual rite of Baptism, in comparison with the authorities just mentioned, seem revised and abbreviated in the manner which in later years became gradually the rule. In what follows we shall therefore be justified in taking our stand on the Ordo, and on the so-called Sacramentary of Gelasius, since, with the exception of a few dubious passages, there is no doubt that they belong at least to the sixth century.[2]

The **first Scrutinium**, or the first gathering of the candidates for Baptism, was held on Wednesday in the third week of Lent. After this there were five other Scrutinies at fixed intervals, the

[1] *Ordo VII. romanus*, in MABILLON, *Mus. Ital.*, I, 77 ff., and reprinted in *P.L.*, LXXVIII., 993 ff. It has been commented upon and accurately dated by PROBST, *Die Sacramentarien und Ordines*, p. 401 ff.

[2] On the great value and antiquity of those portions of the Gelasian Sacramentary which relate to Baptism, see PROBST, ibid., especially p. 218 ff. Cp. the account in DUCHESNE, *Origines du culte*[2], p. 281 ff.; *L'initiation chrétienne.*

last being on Holy Saturday, *i.e.* the Vigil of Easter. These meetings were termed Scrutinies on account of the examination of the grown-up candidates, for whom indeed they were instituted. When occasion arose, others of the Faithful might then give their views as to the advisability of admitting the candidates. The catechumens themselves, or their godparents, were, however, obliged to attend the instructions and give an account of their Faith.

At all the Scrutinies, sermons on Christian doctrine were preached to the elder catechumens. Splendid examples of the instructions given on such occasions are found in the famous Catecheses of St. Cyril of Jerusalem, and in the Homilies of St. Augustine, entitled "*Ad competentes*." The *competentes* or *electi* ("aspirants" or "chosen ones") were the candidates for Baptism, so soon as they had been ceremoniously admitted among the number of the catechumens.

In Rome, in the sixth century, the solemn formality of admission took place at the first Scrutiny.

The meeting was announced to the public two days beforehand, *viz.* at the Station on the Monday after the third Sunday in Lent. The words then used conveyed to the Faithful an invitation to be present "at the Heavenly Mystery, by which the Evil One and the spirit of the world are overcome, and the Gates of the Kingdom of Heaven thrown open."[1]

At the actual meeting, which was held in a Basilica, an acolyth first took the names both of those who offered themselves for Baptism and of those prepared to act as sponsors (*patrini*) to the various candidates. He then placed the candidates in rows, the men on the right and the women on the left, again reading their names aloud. The priest then came forward, breathed upon the face of each—following the example of Christ who had breathed upon His Apostles to symbolise the coming of the Holy Ghost—and then made the sign of the Cross upon their foreheads with his thumb. This done, he stretched his hand over their heads and said the prayer, which in the Gelasian Sacramentary is entitled *Ad catechumenum faciendum.*

There then followed the symbolic ceremony of the Salt, one peculiar to the Roman rite. The priest first exorcised the salt, and then placed a pinch in the mouth of each candidate,

[1] *Sacramentarium Gelasianum*, I, n. 29. *Ordo VII. romanus*, n. 1.

the accompanying words signifying that the salt is a sign of heavenly wisdom.

In the sixth century, John the Deacon, in an epistle to a certain noble named Senarius, who had requested information regarding the customs prevailing in Rome during preparation for Baptism, says of the ceremony of the breathing and of the salt: "The breathing upon takes place to give the Evil Spirit notice that he is to be evicted by the Holy Ghost, and to prepare for the entry of Christ our God. The unbaptized person is a dwelling-place of Satan; he must become the abode of our Saviour. Against the Evil One, now doomed, a mere breath is deemed sufficient, for that is all the old rebel against God deserves. Salt," he continues, "serves in the natural order of things to season and preserve flesh. We, too, season the spirit of the neophyte with the blest salt of wisdom and the teaching of the Word of God, that he may gain fortitude and health against the corruption of the earthly spirit." [1]

After having received the priest's blessing, the new *electi* withdrew to the places appointed for them near the entrance of the Basilica.

Mass then began, according to the Proper for the occasion. This Mass of the Scrutiny, which we still have, contains special prayers for the newly-enrolled catechumens.

After the Collect, however, and before the Lessons, the deacon cried: "Let the catechumens approach." They advanced, and, after their names had again been called, they were placed to the right and left of the predella occupied by the priest, that they might be formally exorcised. This proceeding began with another order from the deacon: "Pray, ye chosen ones, bend your knees." They knelt and prayed in silence. Again the words rang out: "Arise, complete your prayer in unison, and say Amen." The *Flectamus genua* and *Levate* is still repeatedly heard, even in the Catholic Liturgy of the present day, where it tellingly reminds us of customs of earliest ages.

The catechumens, by order of the deacon, were further marked with the Sign of the Cross on their foreheads by their godfathers and godmothers, and then exorcised, one after the other, by three acolyths (originally by exorcists). Each of these made the Sign

[1] *Ep. ad Senarium*, n. 3; *P.L.*, LIX., 402.

of the Cross and imposed his hand upon the neophytes, reciting meanwhile the formula of exorcism, in which Satan, who is presumed to reign in the soul yet entangled in original sin, is ordered "for the future to have nothing in common with the servants of God, who are resolved to turn their backs upon his kingdom," but to hand them over to the Redeemer of the World. "The God of Angels and of Archangels, the God of the Prophets and Martyrs" is implored to guide the catechumens to the grace of Baptism. Peter, in the midst of the storm, walking over the sea to Christ; Susanna delivered from the hands of her calumniators, are the types to which the Church, in these fine and vigorous prayers of antiquity, refers the catechumens, that they may take courage by reflecting upon them. There was then again a spell of silent prayer, commenced and terminated at the deacon's command, after which the priest again made the Sign of the Cross over the neophytes, and gave them his blessing. There followed the Lessons of the Mass. The deacon then cried: "Let the catechumens depart," repeating the formula, with slight variations, a second and a third time.[1]

The crowd of candidates, obedient to the command, retired to the so-called narthex of the church, and the Mass proceeded. As yet they were not entitled to take any direct part in the mysteries of the altar. Their relatives, or sponsors on their behalf, during the sacrifice, offered the usual oblations, in the shape of bread and wine, which were placed on the high altar or on one of the auxiliary tables. At the Memento, before the Consecration, the names of the godfathers and godmothers were rehearsed, with a prayer to God to be mindful of them. At the *Hanc igitur* those of the catechumens were also recited, with a petition appropriate to their state.

At the end of the Mass all present communicated, except the catechumens, who, so far, had not been formally initiated into the mysteries. The mention of this Communion "of all" the Faithful, found in the Seventh Ordo, is a relic of much earlier days; in the sixth century such general Communions had already become exceptional.[2]

[1] "*Catechumeni recedant. Si quis catechumenus est, recedat. Omnes catechumeni exeant foras.*" *Ordo VII.*, n. 3.

[2] "*Post finita vero missarum solemnia communicent omnes praeter ipsos infantes.*" Ibid. Cp. PROBST, *Die Sacramentarien*, p. 411. "*Infantes*," as is well known, was the general name for neophytes, including even grown-up people.

528. The second, fourth, fifth, and sixth Scrutinies were celebrated in the same manner, but the **third Scrutinium** had a character of its own.

At this third assembly took place the bestowal (*Traditio*) of the Creed, of the Gospels, and of the Lord's Prayer. The ceremony was called the "Introduction to the Law," or also the "Opening of the ears" (*aperitio aurium*).

After the exorcisms already described had been repeated, the Mass proceeded in the presence of the neophytes. Excerpts from the prophet Isaias and from the epistles of St. Paul, bearing on the ceremony, were read. Then four deacons, each bearing a book of the Gospels, advanced to the altar. They were accompanied—as at the present day the deacon is when he sings the Gospel—by a thurifer, boat-bearer, and two candle-bearers. They placed the four Gospels upon the four corners of the altar, which was isolated. The priest then read an address to the neophytes from the book of the Liturgy, telling them how the Gospel is being revealed to them, and explaining what is meant by the sacred name of Gospel or Good Tidings.

After this the first deacon read the beginning of the Gospel according to St. Matthew, which the priest then expounded, showing how this Evangelist was usually figured as a man, "because, at the beginning of his Gospel, he describes in detail the human descent of Christ."

The same thing happened with the three other Gospels; after the commencement of each had been read aloud by one of the deacons, the meaning of the symbol bestowed on its writer was explained by the priest. Mark was the lion, because, at the beginning of his Gospel, he speaks of the voice in the wilderness; Luke was the sacrificial ox, because he records the sacrifice of Zachary at the outset; finally, John is the eagle, because, at the beginning of his Gospel, he soars to the highest among the mysteries, and proclaims the incarnation of the Word of God.

Even then these four symbols of the Evangelists were frequently alluded to by ecclesiastical writers, and made use of by Christian artists.

The real reason why these symbols were chosen is pointed out in a passage from one of the priest's addresses, where, it is said, that in the prophecy of Ezechiel the four living creatures

seen by the prophet about the chariot of the cherubim—the man, the lion, the ox, and the eagle—were types of the Evangelists.[1]

After this general introduction to the Gospels, which, doubtless, was supplemented by the priest, the formal profession of Faith was read to the neophytes.

The priest, in an introductory discourse, extolled the symbol or Creed they were "accepting"; it was inspired of God, taught by the Apostles, briefly worded, indeed, but abounding in mysteries. The "Bestowal" of the Creed took place separately, once for the Greeks who happened to be present, and a second time for the Latins. In the period when the Byzantines ruled Rome, the candidates usually stood divided into groups, according to their language, Greek or Latin. An acolyth accordingly took a Greek boy in his arms, and the priest put to the bearer and the group he represented the question: "In what tongue do these confess our Lord Jesus Christ?" The acolyth replied: "In Greek," whereupon the priest said: "Make known the Faith, as they must confess it," and the acolyth, in a loud voice, proceeded to recite the Creed in Greek, meanwhile holding his hand above the boy's head. In the Gelasian Sacramentary, at this point, we even find the Creed in Greek, though written in Latin characters, "*Pistevo is hena theon patera*," &c. The same ceremony was gone through by the acolyth and priest with a Greek girl.

A second acolyth did the same for the Latins, first with a boy, and then with a girl, reciting over them the Creed in Latin, after the formal question had been put: "In what tongue do they confess our Lord Jesus Christ?"

Originally the formula used was always that of the so-called Apostles' Creed, though the Gelasian Sacramentary and the Ordo, for use on this occasion, both give the Nicæno-Constantinopolitan Creed in the two languages. As, however, under Pope Leo III. (795-816), this Creed was no longer in use, its appearance at the baptismal services would seem to have been quite transitory. Perhaps it was introduced by the Popes, at the time of the Byzantine restoration, out of regard for Constantinople.[2]

[1] *Sacramentarium Gelasianum*, I, n. 34: "*Expositio evangeliorum in aurium aperitionem ad electos.*" Ez. x. 14. See the four symbols, *e.g.* present work, vol. ii. p. 75, and p. 118.

[2] One must note that the Gelasian Sacramentary describes its Creed as "*a Domino inspiratum, apostolis institutum.*" It therefore takes for granted that the Apostles' Creed is the one being used. John the Deacon (see above, p. 317, note 1) also says (n. 4): "*Symboli ab apostolis traditi iam meretur* (*catechumenus*) *verba suscipere.*"

In a concluding discourse, the priest repeated in different words the contents of the Symbol, and advised the neophytes to commit it to memory, that with this weapon in their hand they might, as soldiers of Christ, be able to escape the snares of the Evil One.

Upon this followed the third short ceremony of the "bestowal" of the "Lord's Prayer." Here, too, the priest explained in a few words the value of this prayer, taught us by "God's Word and Wisdom, Christ the Lord." The Lord's Prayer was then repeated aloud, sentence by sentence, a short exposition of its meaning accompanying each petition.

After a final admonition to make good use of the Mysteries of Catholic belief now entrusted to them (with the Gospels, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer), the *electi* withdrew. They now took their places in the narthex till the conclusion of the Holy Sacrifice—at which again offerings were made on their behalf by others—and the Communion of the Faithful.

529. At the subsequent Scrutinies the instructions given concerning the truths of salvation became increasingly full. It is true our authorities say nothing of any such instruction, but it stands to reason that it took place. It must have borne particularly on the Holy Eucharist, which was to be received at the baptismal ceremony. Baptism and Communion formed the culminating point of the Christian initiation. For this reason on the sarcophagus of the City Prefect, Junius Bassus, who died as a neophyte (NEOFITVS IIT AD DEVM), as we saw elsewhere, besides the Sacrament of Baptism, the Mystery of the Eucharist was also represented by symbolic actions carried out by lambs.[1] The scene of the Giving of the Law to a Lamb is explained by the ceremony just described of the bestowal of the Gospel at the third Scrutiny. The Scrutinies were, therefore, repeated for further instruction, and had to be seven in number, that, as the Ordo says, the sevenfold gift of the Holy Spirit, which the baptized receive, might be thereby expressed.

On the day before Easter took place the last exorcism of the neophytes—this time not by an acolyth as before, but by a priest. This ceremony was rendered still more impressive by the **Ephphetha.** While the candidates were drawn up as usual right and left, according to sex, the priest signed them with the Cross,

[1] See present work, vol. ii. p. 190, and III. 138.

laid his hand upon them, and gave notice to the Evil One that that very day he would have to quit, once for all, all those "chosen" for Baptism, since Christ enters into possession of them. He then touched their upper lip and their eyes with his finger, moistened with spittle, as our Saviour touched the man born blind, and said: "'Ephphetha,' which is, being interpreted, 'Open to an odour of sweetness.' But thou, cursed Devil, take to flight, for the judgment of God is at hand."

Ceaselessly indeed did the Church in her ceremonies assail the power of darkness which dominated Pagan society and had been called by Christ the "Prince of this World," and by St. John the "great dragon" and the "old serpent," who "seduceth the whole world."[1]

Another symbolic act, according to the Gelasian Sacramentary, succeeded the Ephphetha; the neophytes were anointed with blest oil on the breast and on the back. This was in imitation of the athletes, who were also smeared with oil before their wrestling matches. The neophytes were also compelled to walk barefooted, again, probably, in imitation of the customary procession (*Pompa*) of the athletes in the amphitheatre; to this action a symbolic meaning was, however, attached, and it was taken as showing—as John the Deacon puts it—that the newly baptized would never be deterred by the dangers or difficulties which they might meet on the road of life.[2]

But they were expressly reminded of the spiritual contest for which they were preparing in the three questions addressed to each: "Dost thou renounce Satan? And all his works? And all his pomps?" To which questions the answer was: 'I do renounce them."

After this the neophyte had, as the expression ran, "to return" the Creed. He had received it before to be learnt and pondered, and now he had to profess it, by either reciting it himself, or having it repeated for him by others—the latter being the manner adopted in the case of infants. Having done this, they all, as before, fell upon their knees in response to the deacon's command, and, after a silent prayer followed by an Amen chanted in common, were dismissed by the same official.

[1] JOHN xii. 31: "*princeps huius mundi.*" *Apoc.* xii. 9.

[2] The going barefoot is not mentioned either in the Ordo or in the Gelasian Sacramentary; on the other hand, it is recorded by Johannes Diaconus, whilst pseudo Augustine alludes to it in a passage quoted below (p. 323).

530. In such wise were the solemn and mysterious preliminaries completed, by which the Roman Church prepared her new members to be born anew in the waters of Baptism.

St. Augustine, in a fervent and impressive sermon to his catechumens, preached long before in Christian Africa, where Roman customs were so reverently followed, explains the significance of many of the ceremonies just described, his allusions showing clearly enough that the rite in use in his time coincided in the main with that found later.[1]

He speaks to the catechumens of the exorcisms, of the prayers and chants; of the breathing upon, of the hair-shirt, the prostrations, the baring of the feet, and the various other practices to which they had submitted. He alludes to "the holy awe which pervades the ceremony and raises all hearts," and tells the neophytes that they will find therein the spiritual food with which Mother Church nourishes her children yet unborn while bearing them in her womb, till their birth on the great feast. The Church is the woman in travail of the Apocalypse, whom the dragon awaits to devour the fruit of her womb. "Arm yourselves," cries the orator, "with the Creed of Faith solemnly bestowed on you, by means of which the Church, your Virgin Mother, also triumphantly defends herself. Take its words to your heart, whence by our exorcisms we have banished the Evil One; remember that you have said: I renounce all his pomps, and that this promise made was not merely to men, but to God and His Angels, and was entered, so to speak, in the books of heaven."

## The "Great Night" in the Lateran

531. The solemn Baptism in the night preceding Easter—called the "Great Night"—was in entire harmony with the great mystery commemorated in that festival.[2]

[1] *De symbolo sermo ad catechumenos* (4), 1. *P.L.*, XL., 659. A portion of his sermon occurs in the present Roman Breviary, in the second nocturn of the Vigil of Pentecost, which was formerly the second great day for administering Baptism. [The author has, however, apparently overlooked the fact that this homily is one of those struck out as spurious by Dom Morin. See *Les Leçons apocryphes du Bréviaire romain*, in *Revue Bénéd.*, 1891, p. 273 ff.—*Ed.*]

[2] Pope Pelagius I. mentions the "*nox magna*" in the passage quoted above, p. 276, note 1. On the Holy Saturday service, see KELLNER, *Heortology, a Hist. of the Christian Festivals* (Engl. trans., p. 77 ff.).

On the feast when the Church sang Alleluia, rejoicing in the Resurrection of our Saviour and the promises made to her, she desired the newcomers in her fold to share in the new birth of the Spirit and the pledge of Salvation. Even to this day the Liturgy retains the trace of this happy combination. As of old, the Alleluia still resounds on Holy Saturday, and, even to-day, in Rome and in certain other cathedrals of the Christian world, the newly baptized stand around the altar when the Paschal melodies of our Lord's greatest festival are intoned.

Apart from Easter, the only other day specially set aside for Baptism was Whitsun. When circumstances required it, as, for instance, in the case of sickness, the sacrament could be administered at other seasons and in simpler fashion; but on the days specially assigned, it was celebrated with great pomp, in Rome by the Pope, and, elsewhere, by the Bishop of the locality.

The Easter Baptism attracted crowds of Christian Romans to the Lateran, where the Papal Station was held that same day. On no other day or night were so many people gathered together in the Lateran Basilica as during the ceremonials of the Vigil, the Baptism, and of the Mass that followed. Prudentius, the Christian poet, shows us as early as his day the "long streams of Faithful, who," as he twits the Pagans still remaining, "hasten past the temples of idolatry to the Lateran Palaces to receive with royal chrism the sacred sign." He alludes to the chrism because of the Sacrament of Confirmation, which was, as we shall see, conferred on the new members of the fold immediately after Baptism.[1]

The candidates for Baptism were not only Latins and Greeks, but often foreigners, Goths, Lombards, Franks, or Anglo-Saxons. Not infrequently natives of far-off lands delayed their Baptism to have the happiness of receiving it in Rome, near the tombs of the Saints, under the direction of the Fisherman's successor, just as, before this, many put off their Baptism for years in order to receive it in the Jordan. Among other distinguished strangers who journeyed from their native land to receive Baptism in Rome was Caedwalla, the Anglo-Saxon King. Besides the mixed multitude of candidates attending the Lateran in festal array—some attired after the fashion of the Romans

[1] Prudentius, see present work, vol. i. p. 64.

or Greeks, others in the gaudy costumes of the barbarians, but all hoping to exchange after Baptism their national dress for the white robe of Baptism—were the crowds of relatives and friends, and a long train of Christians who wished to celebrate both the anniversary of their own Baptism and the festival of our Saviour. The Feast of the Resurrection was for the whole City a commemoration of Baptism, for which all the citizens, and not only the catechumens, had prepared by the Lenten fast.[1]

The long service began on the Saturday evening, and ended in the early hours of Easter Sunday.

532. Chanting the Litany, the clergy, the neophytes, and the Pope entered the Basilica. A deacon mounted the ambo, and began his so-called *Praeconium paschale*, a thanksgiving to our Saviour for the holy light from above which He brought into a world lost in darkness and idolatry. Even in the sixth century the Light of Christ was figured by the Paschal candle.

In early times the *Praeconium* was extemporised by the deacon, but probably by the end of the sixth century both the words and the chant had become settled. The time-honoured *Exultet*, with its depth of thought and striking ancient melody, is still sung to-day, nor could any one who has heard it ever forget the experience. Although its use is first proved from Gallican MSS. of the seventh and eighth centuries, we should be justified in putting its origin in Rome before the time of Gregory the Great. The benediction of the Paschal Candle as given in the Gelasian Sacramentary most likely belongs to the original edition of the work.[2]

Besides the Paschal candle, another candle was blessed and lighted at the lamps, which had been burning ever since the consecration of the Holy Oils on the previous Maundy Thursday, though kept concealed.

The church, crammed with people, when all the lights had been lit by the new flame, became as a hall of fire. It was a dramatic representation of the Light brought into the world by Christ, and was especially effective in the Lateran Basilica, where

[1] See Caedwalla's epitaph at St. Peter's in my *Anal. rom.*, 1, 102: "... *Fonte renascentem quem Christi gratia purgans | Protinus albatum vexit in arce poli.*" Caedwalla died in Rome, still wearing the white robe of Baptism.

[2] PROBST, *Sacramentarien*, p. 218 ff. Cp. EBNER, *Hndschr. Studien über das Praeconium paschale*, in *Kirchenmusikal. Jahrb.*, 1893, p. 73 ff.

the marble columns, the polished veneer of the walls, the gilt ceiling, the gold and silver votive offerings, and the seven side-altars, decorated for the occasion, vied with one another in reflecting the lights in the nave. In the blessing of the font the burning Paschal candle and its companion were both used, being each in turn dipped into the water. The symbolic significance of the Light was thus brought into connection with Baptism, an instance of how in the "Great Night" the glorification of our risen Saviour and of the sacrament of Baptism were intermingled even in the details of the ceremonies.

Before the blessing of the water there followed, however, the reading of the Old Testament "Prophecies," this being a part of the Vigil forming the final preparation for the feast. Such Vigils nearly always consisted of Lessons, occasionally broken by a chant. The congregation joined in the singing, for instance, of the better known Psalms, which, as a rule, were probably sung alternately by the people and one or several singers in the choir, though the more complicated and unusual chants were executed by the choir alone, consisting of clerics in Minor Orders stationed inside the railed-off *Schola cantorum*. The number of Lessons read varied according to requirements, and was not the same at all Vigils of the year.

To this day the Lessons for Holy Saturday are composed of the olden so-called prophecies, of which the number in course of time was fixed at twelve. The Lessons are still interspersed with Tracts, sung by the choir, which, like the chorus in Greek drama, repeat, usually in the words of Scripture, the teaching and moral conveyed by the preceding Lesson. The hours of vigil were thus occupied with readings and melodies which served to stimulate both mind and heart. They were understood by all present, for in Rome, in Byzantine times, the service was held in both Latin and Greek owing to the population being divided in language.

The Lessons were usually preceded by a call to attention from the deacon. In the Roman Ordo for the Scrutinies it occurs repeatedly; for instance: "Stand in order and in silence," or "Stand in silence and listen with attention." The command to "Stand" was not a needless one, for many, exhausted by the lengthy service, and in the absence of any seats in the church, would spread the carpets they had brought and lie down on

the marble floor. For the Lessons they were, however, expected to rise.[1]

Even in the books of the Ambrosian rite we find a command of "Silence" given just before the Gospel. The reason of such a direction is made clear by a passage in St. Ambrose, where he says that women should be mindful of the Apostle's command to keep silence in church; while the Psalms are being sung in unison, so he says, attention is generally paid, because all are taking their part; as soon, however, as the cleric reads a Lesson alone, the ladies become restless and start chattering. We must also not forget that ceremonies like that of the Vigil at the Lateran were attended by many out of mere curiosity. Any one who happened to be in Rome for Easter would naturally make a point of seeing the Papal church in the night of its illumination, and the service presided over by the Supreme Pontiff in person.[2]

The Old Testament Lessons, listened to during that night in the Lateran, unfolded a grand picture of God's plans for the salvation of mankind from the very day when Adam was created.

Several Lessons were also chosen with special reference to Baptism, the sacrament by which the children of God are created anew. Such, for instance, is the purport of the story of Noe, saved in the Ark from the waters of the Deluge, the Ark being a type of the Church, into which we enter by Baptism; of the story of the Divine Promise to Abraham, when about to sacrifice his son Isaac: "I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven," for the seed, as the prayer which follows the Lesson explains, is the innumerable progeny gained by the new birth among all the nations. Further on comes the story of the passage of the Red Sea by the Israelites. According to the prayer which follows, God works the same wonder, and a yet greater one, by the baptismal waters of Salvation and amidst the floods through which He leads His chosen people to the everlasting Land of Promise. Finally in the last Lesson, which led up to the actual Baptismal ceremony, we have the history of the Three Young Men in the furnace of burning fire. The bold confession of the young men served to impress the neophytes with what courage and self-sacrifice they must be ready to confess Christ. The timely aid which they received also

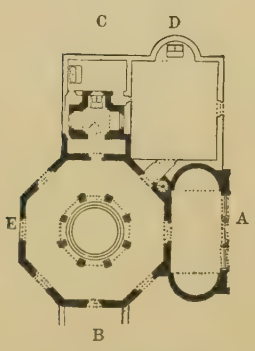
[1] "*State cum disciplina et cum silentio*," No. 2, or more commonly, as in No. 5: "*State, cum silentio, audientes intente.*"

[2] The Ambrosian rite, in PROBST, p. 403, from MABILLON, *De liturgia gall.*, I., 2, 8.

enabled the candidates to realise the protection assured them by a mighty and gracious God.

Among the other Lessons was Isaias's prophecy concerning Baptism, and Ezechiel's concerning the Resurrection. The Tracts, on the other hand, extolled the spiritual vineyard, which is the Church, the last one, which formed the transition to the blessing of the font, being an excerpt from the Psalm: "As the hart panteth after the fountains of waters, so my soul panteth after Thee, O God."

533. As soon as the Tract was completed, the candidates, with the Pope and his clergy, made their way out of the Basilica into the adjoining Baptistery. During this procession the Litany was sung a second time. At the head of the file, accompanied by thurifers, went two notaries carrying the blest candles, both still alight. There would seem to have been a passage from the apse of the Basilica to the Baptistery behind it, allowing of its being entered through its own vestibule (Ill. 226, A; cp. vol. ii., Ill. 83).




Ill. 226.—The Lateran Baptistery. Plan.[1]

In this case the procession of Catechumens must, appropriately enough, have passed before the large mosaic mentioned above, representing the Jordan with its joyous scenes (Ill. 221).

There they must have seen portrayed in stone the holy joys of the sacred waters, which were soon to refresh them; the mystic streams of Paradise flowing down the hill which bore on its summit the great ornamental Cross. The huge figures of the Apostles, looking down from on high, must have reminded them of the solemn bestowal of the Gospel which had so recently taken place.

The Baptismal chapel, if we may call the great and lofty rotunda still existing a chapel, by the manner of its decoration, kept the idea of Baptism before the mind of all who entered.

At the edge of the circular font standing in the centre, were

[1] A, Former entrance to vestibule; B, Pope Hilary's Oratory of St. John the Baptist; C, his Oratory of St. John the Evangelist; D, Oratory of St. Venantius, erected in the seventh century; E, present entrance, formerly used as the exit, leading to the Oratory of the Holy Cross, in which Confirmation was administered. Cp. vol. ii., Ill. 83.

Ill. 227.—The Lateran Baptistery and Signatorium. (Section, reconstructed.)

large silver figures of Christ and John the Baptist, and between them a Lamb with the inscription : " Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world." Below the Lamb the main jet of water fell into the basin, three smaller jets being belched forth from the mouths of so many stags. Steps led down to the water which was several feet deep. The round basin was surrounded by a circle of eight red granite pillars, which can be admired to this day in their original position. They had been erected by Xystus III., who also added the cupola above. Around the pillars ran a spacious circular passage, adjoining which were the oratories of St. John the Evangelist and St. John the Baptist, set opposite each other. The cupola, rising above the frieze of the octagon formed by the eight granite pillars, resembled that in the rotunda of Sta. Costanza, and, as was the case in this latter church, so doubtless in the Lateran Baptistery too, the interior of the vault was adorned with mosaics or pictures having reference to Baptism. From the midst of the font rose a massive porphyry candelabrum, which once bore a golden vessel filled with balm on which floated asbestos wicks. At night these and other lights filled the whole edifice with radiance and sweet perfume. Finally, from the top of the cupola a dove in precious metal hung down, a symbol of the Spirit of God moving over the waters. The metrical inscription of Xystus III., inscribed in great letters on the marble frieze above the pillars, proclaimed, in words we have already had occasion to study, the effects of Baptism, the origin of this sacrament, which sprang from the wound pierced in our Saviour's side when He was hanging on the Cross, and the equality and unity of all Christians, whose one font, one Spirit, and one Faith makes them one single family (Cp. Ill. 227).[1]

534. All present, holding their burning candles, grouped themselves about the font, whereupon the Pope greeted them with the *Dominus vobiscum*. He then, with an *Oremus*, summoned them to united prayer, and, as soon as this was finished, proceeded

[1] Cp. present work, vol. ii. p. 24, and *Anal. rom.*, 1, 106. Ill. 227 is intended to convey some idea of the architecture ; it is less accurate with respect to the decorations described in the *Liber pont.* The illustration is from ROHAULT DE FLEURY, *Le Latran au moyen-âge*, Pl. 33. The Oratory of the Holy Cross, now no longer in existence, has been reconstructed according to old drawings. On this Oratory and its porch, see present work, vol. ii. p. 80 ff.

to bless the water in the mighty font with the prayers still in use to-day and which so resemble the Preface of the Mass.[1]

In the preliminary prayer he had asked God to "send the spirit of adoption to regenerate the new people whom the font of Baptism brings forth." In the blessing which followed he reminded God that, already in the beginning, His Spirit had moved over the waters, and that the deluge which washed away the crimes of a guilty world prefigured a regeneration. He then implored Him to render the water fruitful, that, from the immaculate womb of the divine font, a heavenly progeny may come forth. In the course of this long blessing, couched in words so profoundly suggestive, we not only find an allusion to the sacrament's origin in the wounded side of Christ, and other figures already familiar to us through the inscription of Xystus III., but also references to the four rivers of Paradise, which watered all the earth ; to the water, brought forth by Moses from the rock for a thirsty people, and to the Jordan, in which Christ by His own Baptism had hallowed the water. Thus the Scriptural Lessons, the decorations of the spot, and the impressive prayer of benediction all worked together to elucidate the meaning of the ceremony.

At the words of the blessing : "May the power of the Holy Ghost descend into the fulness of this font," the two attendants dipped their candles into the water. At the conclusion the Pope poured on the water from a golden vessel the oil which had been consecrated on Maundy Thursday, and mixed both elements with his hand.

As soon as the blessing was over the Baptisms began.

The Archdeacon led the neophytes one by one to the Pope, to whom each once more confessed his Faith by answering affirmatively certain brief questions.

Each then descended into the baptismal font, either in an entirely nude state, agreeably with the olden practice, or with the scantiest of costumes. The threefold "immersion" had, however, already ceased to be carried out literally. The candidate was made to stand in the water, and, from one of the jets surrounding the basin a triple shower or "aspersion" was cast so as to drench his head and body. By this means the olden immersion was

[1] *Sacr. Gelas.*, I, n. 44 : "*Inde descendis cum letania ad fontem. Benedictio fontis.*" The Baptistery was known as "*S. Ioannes in Fonte.*"

combined with the so-called infusion or sprinkling. The priests, deacons, and other clergy taking a part in the proceeding also stood in the water, clad in white vestments. The ceremony was repeated for each candidate, the accompanying formula being, "I baptize thee in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost."

The godfathers and godmothers seized the hand of the neophyte, as soon as he was ready to leave the water, "lifting" him out of the font, and then taking him under their protection. They dried him with linen cloths held in readiness, and presented him to a priest, who completed the baptismal ceremony by signing the Cross on his forehead with the scented consecrated oil or chrism, in doing which the priest repeated the words: "May Christ, who hath regenerated thee through water and the Holy Ghost, anoint thee with the chrism of Salvation unto Life Everlasting."

It is needless to add that, throughout the ceremony, all care was taken to safeguard modesty as then understood, and that strict supervision was exercised. Females, for instance, were waited on by matrons. We must, however, not forget that in those early times, in consequence of the vast difference in public opinion, there was less bashfulness, nor were people so ready to take offence then, as in subsequent ages.[1]

The robe which those who had been baptized assumed, was white, to express the purity bestowed by Baptism. Pope Gregory the Great speaks in many passages of the white garments of the newly baptized, and in terms which clearly show that he was alluding to grown up people, or at any rate not to mere infants.[2]

Whilst the candidate was dressing, a white linen cloth was bound around his head, serving as a symbol of the priestly crown. Such at least was the explanation given of this bandage at the time of John the Deacon. As a matter of fact, the practice arose

[1] Cp. Ill. 228 and DUCHESNE, *Origines du culte chrét.*[5], p. 320. On the female attendants, cp. *Canones Hipp.*; DUCHESNE. ibid., p. 539. Duchesne is, however, mistaken in supposing that the name of one of the chapels of the Baptistery ("*S. Ioannes ad vestem*" [Ill. 226B]) shows it to have been used as a disrobing room. The name arose from the "*vestis*" or "*tunica*" of St. John the Baptist having been kept there.

[2] GREG., *Registrum*, 8, n. 1. Writing to Peter, the Corsican Bishop of Aleria, the Pope says: "*Transmisimus fraternitati tuae quinquaginta solidos ad vestimenta eorum, qui baptizandi sunt, comparanda.*" Cp. 5, n. 17 (5, n. 3), and 8, n. 23, where mention is also made of the white garments usually worn by the neophytes.

from the wish to keep that part of the head covered which had been anointed with chrism.[1]

535. **Confirmation,** which usually followed immediately after Baptism, after the time of Pope Hilary, was generally administered in the Oratory to the Cross, erected by him.[2]

Previously the same purpose had no doubt been served by the chamber near the entrance to the Baptistery, where we still see the apse vaulting decorated with the Vine of Christ in mosaic. The mosaic, with its classical twining vine, probably belongs to a time earlier than Hilary's, and between the leaves it displays a number of crosses. As those confirmed, according to the words which accompanied the rite, were "signed with the sign of the Cross," it may be that the crosses here had some reference to the sacrament in question.[3]

The Oratory of the Holy Cross was, however, better suited to this purpose, especially on account of its size. Thither accordingly the neophytes proceeded through the door opposite the porch of the Baptistery (Ill. 226, E.), *i.e.* that which now serves as the entrance to the building. They then went along the open portico which once united the Baptistery with the Chapel of the Holy Cross. The night was now far advanced, and we can well imagine how picturesque was the procession of white-robed candidates making their way with their myriad lights and the rest of the Faithful, singing psalms, amidst ancient arcades with the star-lit heavens above and the fountains babbling in the gardens around (Cp. Ill. 227).

On reaching the Oratory they were drawn up in front of the Pope's throne in two rows, and in the same order as their names had originally been called. Stress is always laid on this last detail by the Ordo, for no one was to intrude without examination. The Pope, with outstretched hand, then invoked the Holy Ghost, praying Him to send down His sevenfold gift upon those born anew and to "seal them unto Life everlasting with the sign of the Cross of Christ" (*"consignare," "Sacramentum consignationis"*).

[1] Cp. the epistle of Johannes Diaconus, cited above, p. 317, note 1 (n. 6): "*Renascentis caput lintei decore componitur*," &c. According to the seventh Roman Ordo cited on p. 315 (n. 11), the candidates received from the Pope before Confirmation: "*Stolam, casulam et chrismale et decem siclos* [the Pope's Easter gift], *et vestiuntur*."

[2] On this Oratory, see present work, vol. ii. p. 80 ff.

[3] There is a good figure of the mosaic in DE ROSSI, *Musaici*, sec. v. It is de Rossi who points out its possible reference to Confirmation.

He thereupon made the sign of the Cross upon each candidate's forehead, with his thumb dipped in chrism, at the same time repeating a form of words, and then dismissed each with the usual "*pax*."[1]

536. At last the Mass could begin. All accordingly returned in procession to the Basilica, where the Litany was being sung by the choir. This is the only one of the three Litanies in use in the ancient ritual, retained in the services to-day. The choir had remained in the church, and had begun the chant in the Pope's absence. The invocations were repeated first seven times, then five times, finally three times, with an occasional pause. Towards the end of the threefold invocations, the Pope entered with his attendants, and prostrated himself before the altar.[2]

On rising he intoned the "*Gloria in excelsis*," and proceeded with the Mass. It was the first time the neophytes had been allowed to attend the Liturgy with the rest of the Faithful. The Mass, even now sung on Holy Saturday, is clearly enough intended for Easter, this being evident from the threefold Alleluia chanted after the Epistle to proclaim our Saviour's victory over death. At the "*Hanc igitur*," however, the celebrant expressly commemorates the neophytes.

At the end of the service they also partook of the Body of Christ. Even little children just baptized received this Sacrament, on which account the Seventh Ordo expressly lays it down that they were not to be suckled after Baptism. Fasting Communion had even then already long been the rule.

Before the end of the Canon, the Pope had blessed a mixture of milk, honey, and water, which was poured into the chalice of the Mass after the Communion, and, as John the Deacon tells us, was given to the neophytes to drink, clearly as a sort of ablution. According to the same authority, this was to show that those who had been baptized had entered into the true "Promised Land, flowing with milk and honey." Hence, being about to begin their wanderings through this land, they are, he says, rightly compared to little ones, for whom milk and honey form the best diet.

[1] On Confirmation as administered in the Oratory of the Holy Cross and as figured on ancient Christian monuments, see F. J. DÖLGER (*Röm. Quartalschr.*, 19 (1905), 1 ff., *Die Firmung in den Denkmälern des altchr. Altertums*), whose views are at variance with the present writer's.

[2] Cp. DUCHESNE, *Orig. du culte*[5], p. 476.

537. By the time the Faithful and their new brethren made their way home, the dawn of Easter Sunday had already broken. In the Lateran there was no other Mass that day, but in the morning the Liturgy was celebrated a second time at the second Papal Cathedral, Sta. Maria Maggiore.

In the afternoon, the neophytes were expected to assemble again before the Pope in the Lateran, for solemn Vespers. After the Magnificat and final prayer, all left the Basilica, and, chanting meanwhile joyous hymns in Greek and Latin, proceeded to the Baptistery, where a pause was made, and then to the Oratory of the Holy Cross. We still have the prayers recited by the Pope at these lesser stations.

Not on Easter Sunday only, but every day in Easter Week, the neophytes were expected to visit the two sacred spots which they had reason to cherish so highly, having there being born anew, and marked with the cross as soldiers of Christ. This was a happy device adopted for keeping fresh the first impressions made by the Mysteries. In addition to this the catechumens during that week were present at the Mass which the Pope celebrated every day at a different church of the City after the fashion of a station. They retained their white raiment for the whole octave, *i.e.* till Low Sunday, which thence obtained its name of *Dominica in Albis*. The singular and edifying procession of the white-robed *Candidati*, accompanied on their visits to the churches by crowds of other Faithful, well expressed the idea, that the Paschal festival constituted for the whole City a general commemoration of its Baptism.

On Easter Monday the Pope betook himself with the neophytes to St. Peter's, for the church of the Prince of the Apostles deserved the first token of respect—the chief shepherd, the first visit of his new lambs. In the Gelasian Sacramentary the prayer of the Mass for this day fittingly refers to St. Peter. On Tuesday, the place of meeting was St. Paul's. It is worthy of notice that in the present Missal, the lesson for the Monday Mass is an excerpt from a discourse in which Peter the Apostle proclaims the Resurrection of Christ, while on the Tuesday a similar discourse by St. Paul serves the same purpose; each Apostle thus holds forth in his own church. The present Missal still enumerates these ancient Stations in their original order.

On Wednesday there was a Station at San Lorenzo fuori le

Mura, to honour the Saint who stood third in rank in the Romans' estimation. The Gospel speaks of the miraculous draught of fishes, and of the feeding of the seven disciples with fish and bread, a reference, doubtless, to the gain of the candidates for the faith and to their recent communion.

On Thursday the neophytes and the rest met in the then favoured church of SS. Philip and James, the Apostoleion of Rome, where the lesson reminded them how the eunuch of Queen Candace of Ethiopia had been baptized by Philip. On Friday, there was, in later times, a Station at *S. Maria ad Martyres* (the Pantheon), and on Saturday another in the Lateran. On Low Sunday, the last day of the octave, the neophytes were in attendance at the Basilica on the Aurelian Way dedicated to the youthful martyr St. Pancras, who, as we know, was venerated as patron of the innocent and as guardian of oaths. This Mass began, as at present, with the words from the first Epistle of St. Peter: "As new-born babes, desire the rational milk without guile."

Ill. 228.—Scene of Baptism on an Early Christian Silver Spoon from Aquileia.

A year later, neophytes celebrated a festival of their own, the *Pascha annotinum*, in memory of the grace received. On this, the Christian's birthday, since earliest times it had been customary to give suitable presents, reminding the recipient of the hallowed day. The beautifully executed lamp in Florence in the shape of a ship with its inscription, "The Lord gives the Law to Valerius Severus. Long live Eutropius!" was evidently a memorial of the "giving" of the law to Valerius, and of his admission by Baptism into the ship which is the Church (see vol. i., Ill. 14). Likewise, when we find on early specimens of gilt glass, pictures of Christ bestowing the Law on Peter, and recollect that such glasses were frequently used as gifts, we shall not be far wrong in looking on them as christening presents, particularly when the inscription expressly congratulates some person. Articles, whether for domestic or church use, were frequently adorned with designs relating to Baptism. The spoon, of early Christian workmanship from Aquileia (Ill. 228),[1] displaying the dove or symbol of the

[1] Garrucci, *Arte crist.*, tav. 462, n. 8.

Holy Ghost descending upon the naked neophyte standing in the font, is a good instance in point.

538. In such wise were new members admitted into the Church's fold towards the close of the ancient world. Rome, her Bishop and her clergy could well celebrate their triumph, for the profoundly significant ceremonies of Eastertide ever enlarged the circle of the Faithful. What the Church of Rome desired was no earthly domination or enhancement of authority, but the growth of Christ's kingdom, and the most earnest efforts of her Bishops were spent in winning over those still outside the Church, and in making them members of the great and world-spread family of the redeemed who acknowledge Christ as their Head.

It is now, however, time to look beyond the narrow confines of the Roman Church and her peculiar practices, and to see what position the Bishops of Rome occupied in the ecclesiastical world.

As the Church steadily enlarged her borders, her chief pastors were more and more called upon to fulfil the task assigned them with their office by God, of knitting together the scattered members into the close union demanded by Christ. We have already studied in detail this progressive development of Rome's authority within the Roman Empire previous to the sixth century, but, so far, we have made but cursory allusions to the work of the Roman Primate outside the limits of the Empire.

In what follows, we shall complete our description of the Close of the Ancient World with which our first three volumes are concerned by considering more closely the continuance and progress of the Papal office during the sixth century, at a time when the boundaries of the Roman Empire were already badly broken, while new nations were opening fresh spheres of action for the See of Rome.

# CHAPTER VI

## THE ROMAN PRIMACY IN THE SIXTH CENTURY

### The Oneness of the Roman Empire

539. In the brilliant account given by Pliny of the greatness of the Roman Empire, the dominant idea is, that under its supremacy, all the nations of the world are welded into one majestic whole.[1]

According to the view held by the Romans in his time, Rome was to provide mankind with a new lease of life, and even the majority of the vanquished nations agreed in the hope that this state of things would last for ever. This hope was indeed fulfilled, though in a sense far more perfect than the Pagan world could have foreseen.

When Rome's secular rule collapsed in the West, the Christian Church, with its supreme See in decaying, ancient Rome, was already established as a powerful organisation designed to embrace all the inhabitants of the world in one spiritual family. The Church was thus a means of realising the old Roman conception, though in a nobler and purer form. What she offered mankind was no mere outward bond founded on violent conquest, and involving the subjection of all to the same set of rigid laws. Of such a stamp was the oneness of the Old Roman Empire; that of the Church, on the other hand, strove after an harmonious association, after a mutual alliance of countries on the basis of the same religious faith, and of that charity which is Heaven's own gift.

Yet the Old Roman Empire was not entirely dead. Its conceptions still held good in the East whither the Empire had removed its seat of government, and Byzantium sought to uphold as of yore the name and authority of Rome in the West. Such western countries as still remained subject to it, for instance, North Africa, that part of Italy left unconquered by the Lombards, likewise Istria, Dalmatia, Illyricum, and finally the regained coasts of

[1] Pliny, *Hist. nat.*, 14, c. 2; 27, c. 2. Cp. Friedländer, *Sittengesch. Roms*[6], 2, 4.

Spain, were still "Roman" as of old. Byzantium also strove to prevail on the new States founded by the "Barbarians" to group themselves about the Roman Empire either by admitting its suzerainty, or by becoming its respectful friends and allies.

The Emperor of the Eastern Roman Empire, not without some show of reason, deemed himself heir to the ancient *Imperium mundi*. The impression already made by the ancient world-empire on the national life of all who had been subject to it was so deep that there were but few to doubt that Constantinople was the capital of the world, and the Emperor its supreme sovereign. The Empire of the "Romans" still represented civilisation as opposed to barbarism. Its manners, its culture, and its wise and complex system of government, amidst this chaos of new peoples, were rightly looked upon as shining examples. On the other hand, the Romans themselves, conformably with their olden practice, continued to qualify all who were outside the Empire as *gentes*, *i.e.* as mere hordes.

If the Popes were unswervingly faithful to the Imperial conception now incorporated in Byzantium, this was out of respect for tradition and for old-established right, and was therefore a result of that conservative spirit which so strongly characterised their rule, and which the Church even fostered on religious grounds. This attitude of the Church was also to the advantage of the people. The oneness represented by the Empire and the civilisation for which it stood could not fail to be of profit to the world, provided always that its oneness was not mere tyranny, and that its civilisation was open to the leaven of Christianity. It was in the best interests of the Church that the Popes should promote the political unity so dear to the Roman Government, for the *Imperium mundi*, ever since the time of the first Christian Emperors, had powerfully contributed to help the Church, which is God's Kingdom on earth, and to assist in its extension.

The theory, however imperfectly realised in practice, was that the highest temporal authority should be the Church's protector, and the Emperor, the sovereign of the world, the chief guardian of the Church's peace.[1]

In Pagan times the Emperor had even borne the title of *Pontifex Maximus*, and the supreme power, both spiritual and

[1] Cp. present work, vol. ii. p. 3 ff.

temporal, was united in the throne. Such a state of affairs could no longer continue after the Divine Founder of Christianity had placed the government of His Kingdom in other hands and established a system independent of the temporal authority. In spite of this, those of the Emperor's former prerogatives which were deemed compatible with Christianity were religiously retained, and the Supreme Pontiff of other times became a Supreme Protector.

540. Nowhere is the idea of the Christian Empire so well expressed by the Roman Church as in the language of her Liturgy. It was but natural for her to express in the sanctuary of her altar the thoughts to which the parlous condition of the world gave rise. This is the reason why, even to-day, we find her asking God's blessing on hopes and plans which seem like an echo from the time of the best-minded Emperors of the Christian Roman Empire. Such are the solemn formulæ of prayer, which outlived the Middle Ages, when they were adapted to the German sovereigns of the Holy Roman Empire, and are still partly preserved in the present Missal. They had not long been introduced, when, through the fault of the Empire, or through the circumstances of the age, they became mere ideals, never to be adequately fulfilled. Yet who can blame the Church of Rome for having, during the general wreck of the world, kept her eyes fixed upon her grand ideals, and for having continued to petition God for the highest good, albeit she had long been compelled to content herself with less?

In the most impressive hour of the year, in the Good Friday Liturgy, we hear her praying for the holder of the Imperial power "that God may make all barbarous nations subject to him, to our everlasting peace." "Look graciously," she cries, "upon the Roman Empire, that the nations (*gentes*), who trust in their wild force, may be subdued by the power of Thy right hand." The distress accompanying the barbarian irruptions alluded to in this prayer was accountable for other similar prayers for the Roman Empire. "Overthrow, O Lord, the foes of the Roman name and the enemies of the Catholic Faith"; or again: "Through Thy grace may both the Roman State and Christian piety be preserved." In these latter prayers, the Roman Power seems almost to be placed on a level with the Catholic

Communion. This is, however, the usual language of the Liturgy elsewhere. The Christian Empire is, in another place, simply described as "the Kingdom which obeys Thy Divine Majesty." When heaven's aid is invoked for the protection of the "Roman name," this, in the Church's language, is tantamount to asking God's help for the support of religion.[1]

No earthly power could maintain the Empire in the West, and it had been ordained by Providence that its frontiers should be steadily encroached on by strangers, making room for fresh political groups. But if the unity of the Roman World was destroyed, or reduced to that of a mere confederation, the ecclesiastical unity of Rome remained intact. It became the Church's urgent task to keep the nations struggling for independence united at least in Faith and under one hierarchy; in some instances she had even to instil into them the very notion of unity, with which they were as yet unacquainted. The authority of the Roman Primacy hung, so to speak, in the balance; but if Rome could only become the recognised headquarters of religion in the new constitution of the world, as it had been previously within the Roman Empire, then unity was safe for the future.

At the same time we must beware of exaggeration, and not insist unduly on the crisis through which Rome had then to pass. Rome dealt, without any great display of effort, with the problems presented by a world in decay. In fact, the measures to this end taken by its Bishops were so apparently trivial that the Popes would scarcely seem to have been aware of any danger. Gently, and as a matter of course, submission to the Holy See established itself with the Gospel among the converted nations. The Primacy of Rome was, as it were, taken for granted by the very acceptance of the Faith, and the world remained deeply conscious of the Supremacy of the Roman Church. As early

[1] ". . . *ut Deus omnipotens subditas illi* [*imperatori*] *faciat omnes barbaras nationes ad nostram perpetuam pacem.*" "*Respice propitius ad romanum benignus imperium, ut gentes, quae in sua feritate confidunt, dexterae tuae potentia comprimantur.*" Also in the prayer of the Gelasian Sacramentary, MURATORI, *Opp.* (ed. AREZZO), 13, P. 2, p. 111. This same prayer is also found in Mabillon's Gallican Missal, the *Romanum Imperium* being expressly mentioned. "*Hostes romani nominis et inimicos catholicae professionis expugna.*" (*Oratio in Domin. Pentec.*, *P.L.*, LV., 42.) Cp. ibid., 76, 80, 86, 81: "*Tuo munere dirigantur et romana securitas et devotio christiana.*" Ibid. (133), the Roman Empire is described as: "*Regnum tuae maiestati deditum,*" and a prayer is for the "*custodia romani nominis.*" The Gelasian and Gregorian Sacramentaries both of them repeat these prayers almost in the same words.

as 430 the Christian poet Prosper of Aquitania could exclaim: "Rome, the See of Peter, through the excellence of his pastoral office, has been made the head of the world; what the City fails to subdue by force of arms, it holds by the power of religion."[1]

There is, however, no doubt that her task was facilitated by the wisdom with which she adopted the Roman conception and pushed it in the world; nor could either her right or her ability so to do be disputed by any. The memory of the ancient Italian supremacy and of the Roman Empire survived in the West, thanks only to the Church. Even the customs and views of the Romans were retained in the countries subdued by barbarians only through the Church's exertions. Owing to her spiritual character, she indeed rose superior to all national differences; yet, having once been in contact with Latin and Hellenic culture, she naturally stood forth for Roman civilisation, which she succeeded in making all-powerful, besides insuring it a preponderating influence in matters political.[2]

The Bishops of the Church were educated as Romans, so far as the times allowed of any education whatsoever; her missionaries, too, made their settlements real nurseries of Roman civilisation. Canon Law was cast in the mould of Roman jurisprudence, and, under the Church's influence, Roman law found its way into the codes of the new nations. Everywhere the Church's representatives laid stress on the need of union with Rome, the Metropolis, which, thanks to Peter's keys, was more than ever, and in a far higher sense, the capital of the world.[3]

In the following pages we shall endeavour to make more clear the action of the Primacy during the latter half of the sixth century by instancing some of the occasions on which it intervened and was acknowledged in various quarters of the world; in this we are, however, somewhat handicapped by the scantiness of the information at our disposal and the scarcity of Papal letters

[1] The passage so often quoted from Prosper (*De ingratis*, v. 51 ff.) runs:

"*Sedes Roma Petri, quae pastoralis honoris*
*Facta caput mundo, quidquid non possidet armis*
*Religione tenet.*"

[2] Cp. EBERT, *Literatur des Abendl.*[2], 1, 361.

[3] Of the clever work by an anonymous Roman prelate (*Delle cause della grandezza di Roma*, &c., Roma, 1884), one part is devoted to proving "che i principii della grandezza di Roma [pagana], la legge divina o naturale, e il concetto del diritto, dell' uguaglianza e della libertà, che ne deriva, il principio dell' autorità del senato e della religione, si trovano nella chiesa elevati all' ordine soprannaturale o in istato di perfezione" (pp. 123–229).

which chance has preserved. We shall pursue the order we followed in our survey of the political decline of the age, beginning with the Byzantine Empire and the North African Provinces, then considering the Western countries, and, last of all, the Frankish States. Everywhere the Papacy strove, so far as lay in its power, to retrieve the harm done, or at least to mitigate the evils of the period by the blessings of ecclesiastical unity, and by a revival of faith.

## Byzantium and North Africa

541. In the name of the **Byzantine Empire,** Justinian, the law-making Emperor, by a decree, had assured Pope John II. that, agreeably with ancient tradition, to the Church of Rome "all Bishops throughout the Empire must be subject, as to the head of all the Churches."[1]

Pelagius I. and Pelagius II. strove to uphold this principle against the schismatics of Istria. Both took their stand on the plenitude of power inherent in the Primacy bestowed by God upon the Popes, on the strength of which they insisted that the seceding Bishops should be reconciled and make their submission. Pelagius I. declared invalid beforehand a great synodal assembly, which the schismatics intended holding in support of their party; in his turn, the second Pope of this name forcibly expounded for their benefit such passages in Holy Scripture as testify to the divine right of the successors of Peter.[2]

On another important occasion Pelagius II. was compelled to undertake the defence of unity and discipline in the Empire, and again displayed his acute consciousness of the responsibilities of his office and his insight into the future. The Patriarch of Constantinople, John IV., commonly known as "the Faster," held a Council for the trial of Gregory, Patriarch of Antioch, at which assembly all the highest magnates of the Eastern Church either took part in person or were represented by delegates. John, who was not devoid of vanity, who shared the desire for self-aggrandisement

[1] *Codex Iustiniani*, L. 1, tit. 1, l. 3.

[2] On Pelagius I., see *Neues Archiv*, 5 (1880), 553; JAFFÉ-KALTENBR., n. 1018; MANSI, 9, 715. See above, p. 40, note 1. LANGEN (*Gesch. der röm. Kirche*, 2, 389), on the authority of this letter, wrongly holds the Council to have actually met. For Pelagius II., see especially the letter to Elias of Aquileia, in JAFFÉ-KALTENBR., n. 1054; MANSI, 9, 891; and in HARTMANN, Append. III. to the *Registrum Gregorii Magni*, p. 443. See above, p. 162 ff.

which had long possessed the See of Byzantium, and, in addition, was sure of being supported by the Court, took this opportunity of formally assuming the title of "Œcumenical Patriarch." In the West, however, and especially in Rome, the creation of a new title, *Patriarcha Universalis*, seemed to forebode ill, to threaten confusion in the old-established hierarchy, and, at the very least, to be at variance with that humility and charity in which lies the pledge of concord and unity. Hence the Pope, regardless of the position occupied by the Patriarch at the Court of Byzantium, promptly quashed the enactments of the Synod, excepting the one decree regarding the accused Patriarch of Antioch. John he summoned to renounce the new title he had usurped. He even forbade his deacon, the Papal Apocrisiary in Constantinople, to accompany the Patriarch to the celebration of the Liturgy, so long as amends were not made for the wrong done. The actual wording of the Pope's instructions is not known, and the document made public by Baronius has no claim to authenticity; the fact that such instructions were given can, however, be otherwise proved.[1]

Gregory the Great, the successor of Pelagius II., was obliged to take fresh steps against the presumptuous title, until at last, thanks to a peremptory order of the Emperor Phocas, obedience was paid to the Roman See. It was Boniface, the one-time Apocrisiary, who, in 607, received this satisfaction, after becoming Pope Boniface III.[2]

542. The Apocrisiaries of the Holy See were the Pope's own representatives at Constantinople. From the latter half of the fifth century such permanent representation at the Imperial Court had gradually become the rule, and, even under Leo the Great, the Bishop of Cos had been entrusted with similar duties in the Greek metropolis. As deacons, Pope Vigilius and Pope Pelagius I. had both been Apocrisiaries in Constantinople. Nor was their promotion at all unusual, for, later on, it often happened that those accredited to the Imperial Court—usually Roman deacons—eventually became Popes.

[1] *Reg. Gregorii Magni*, 5, n. 41 (MAUR., 5, n. 43), to the Patriarchs Eulogius and Anastasius. Cp. 5, n. 44 (5, n. 18, *Ioanni ep. Constantinop.*; 9, n. 156 (9, n. 68), *Eusebio Thessalonicensi*, &c.

[2] *Liber pont.*, 1, 316, n. 115. Cp. on the whole controversy and its previous history, my article "*Oekumenischer Patriarch und Diener der Diener Gottes*," in the *Zeitschr. für kath. Theol.*, 4 (1880), 468–523.

The Apocrisiaries were not usually furnished with any exceptional powers, and were therefore not on the same footing as the Papal Legates (*Legati a latere*). Generally speaking, they acted as channels of communication between the Empire and the Holy See, to which they sent periodical reports. It was from this duty of making reports and answering questions put by Rome that the office received its Latin name of "Responsalis," corresponding to the Greek title "Apocrisiarius." Bearing in mind the many matters concerning the whole Eastern Church which were dealt with by the Emperor and his Patriarch, we may form some idea of the importance of the office held by the Apocrisiaries, who, moreover, were not only Rome's agents in Church affairs, but, particularly since the Lombard invasion, were charged with the task of bringing before the Supreme Court the necessities of Italy and its chief City. In a recently discovered fragment of an epistle, we find Pelagius I. summoning home his deacon, Sarpatus, who had hitherto discharged the office of Apocrisiary at Constantinople, because, at his age, he was no longer able to cope with the difficulties of his position. "An Apocrisiary," says Pelagius, "may not quit the Palace, even for an hour." [1]

Unfortunately, we are in almost entire ignorance of the numerous Papal measures and decisions, whether intended for East or West, which were the subject of discussion at the Byzantine Court, as scarcely anything remains of the correspondence of the Apocrisiaries. One step taken by Pelagius II., and of which we hear by chance in another letter, may be mentioned here. He withdrew the bishopric of Thebæ from the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan of Larissa, placing it under immediate Papal control, because the Metropolitan had abused his authority.[2]

543. In the sorely-tried Byzantine provinces of **North Africa,** the first duty of the Holy See was to re-erect the hierarchy and establish good order in the Church. In so doing, Rome sought to effect the necessary improvements on the lines already laid down by the Apostolic See.[3]

[1] *Neues Archiv*, 5 (1880), 559, n. 63. JAFFÉ-KALTENBR., n. 1035: "*Apocrisiarius qui est, una hora de palatio recedere non potest.*"

[2] *Registrum Gregorii Magni*, 3, n. 7; JAFFÉ-EWALD, n. 1211.

[3] As Pope Agapetus says: "*Quae sedis apostolicae principalitas perscripsit.*" MANSI, 8, 850. Letter to Reparatus, Archbishop of Carthage, concerning certain cases, JAFFÉ-KALTENBR., n. 893.

The African Church bore clear marks of its Roman origin and of its intimate subordination to the Popes. Nowhere did Church customs display a character more thoroughly Roman than in the native land of Cyprian, Augustine, Optatus, and Fulgentius, and, even to this day, when history is silent regarding certain details of religious or liturgical observance practised in Rome, we may safely seek information from African writers.

In Africa the Papacy experienced but little difficulty in wiping out the consequences of the Three-Chapter Schism. The disturbance due to this schism had not lasted long there, in spite of the partisan spirit shown at its beginning. This was the result partly of the steps taken by the Popes to pacify and instruct, partly, too, of the firmness of the secular government. In Africa the secular tribunals strenuously fulfilled the task assigned them by the State, of lending Rome, in her efforts on the Church's behalf, the whole weight of their worldly authority. Wherever the supreme spiritual authority and that of the representatives of Byzantium went hand in hand, in accordance with the theory of the mutual rights and duties of State and Church, there, as in Africa, the power of the Roman Primate to unite all forces, and to further the Christian cause, was even more manifest than elsewhere. The leanings of the African episcopate and ecclesiastical writers were not, however, in the direction of riot and schism. Already, before this, Ferrandus, the deacon of Carthage, one of the most outspoken defenders of the Three Chapters, had declared that, in questions of Catholic doctrine, "the Prelate of the Apostolic See" was the first person to be consulted, for both truth and authority rested with him. On the same grounds, his fiery colleague in the Three-Chapter controversy, Liberatus, another deacon of Carthage, had betaken himself to Rome, in order to have important affairs of his Church examined and settled at the very seat of judgment.[1]

In a work by an African Bishop of the fifth century, possibly Bishop Voconius, we find these striking words: "Thou canst

[1] Ferrandus to the Scholasticus Severus of Constantinople regarding certain Christological questions: "*Interroga, vir prudentissime, si quid veritatis cupis audire, principaliter apostolicae sedis antistitem, cuius sana doctrina constat iudicio veritatis et fulcitur munimine auctoritatis. Interroga plurimos per diversa loca pontifices.*" *Ep.* 5. *P.L.*, LXVII., 911.

not be accounted of the Catholic Faith if thou dost not teach the Roman Faith." [1]

## The Primacy and its relations with the Visigoths and Britons

544. The early intercourse between the Popes and Spain was resumed on many occasions during the sixth century, and without the slightest difficulty, the Bishops of that region being generally full of respect for the "General Statutes" sent them by Pope Hormisdas.[2]

Pope Vigilius answered fully and incisively the questions which Profuturus, Bishop of Bracara in the Spanish kingdom of the Suevi, put to him as his supreme ecclesiastical superior. He points out that the "Rule of Faith" has been committed to his care, and that it is the right and duty of the Apostolic See to watch over Catholic discipline. Among other things he sent Profuturus "the text of the canonical prayer [*i.e.* the Canon of the Mass] which we," he says, "have received from Apostolic tradition." [3]

At the second Council of Bracara in 563, the Pope's reply was solemnly read aloud, and the decrees of the Bishops there assembled show them to have taken it as a guide, for instance, their decision that the Roman Canon should be followed at Mass. Similarly the Synod in its measures against the after-effects of Priscillianism expressly followed the instructions sent by Leo the Great in letters to the episcopate of Gallæcia and to Bishop Turibius, which were likewise read at the assembly.[4]

A whole line of Bishops, distinguished alike for learning and zeal, began soon after to labour among the Visigoths in a spirit of

[1] "*Non crederis veram fidem tenere catholicam, quae fidem non doces esse servandam romanam.*" MAI, *Nova patrum biblioth.*, I, 273. MORIN, *Revue Bénéd.*, 1896, p. 341.

[2] Pope Hormisdas to the Spanish Bishops (April 2, 517). JAFFÉ-KALTENBR., n. 787, with the expression "*Generalia Statuta.*"

[3] The letter of Vigilius has come down to us in the *Collectio Hispana;* see HINSCHIUS, *Pseudo-Isid.*, 710 (cp. p. cv); JAFFÉ-KALTENBR., n. 907. MANSI, 9, 29, requires correction. Profuturus desired to be informed "*quid iuxta catholicam disciplinam teneat apostolicae sedis auctoritas.*" Vigilius sent him "*textum canonicae precis, quem ex apostolica traditione suscepimus.*"

[4] On the reading of the "*instructio sedis apostolicae*" at the Council, see MANSI, 9, 776 ff. In cap. 4 the Synod, alluding to the Canon sent to Profuturus, decrees: "*ex eodem ordine missae celebrentur*"; in cap. 5 it also directs the "*ordo baptizandi*" received by him to be observed; in cap. 14 steps are taken against a Priscillianist usage. On the reading aloud of Leo the Great's letter, see MANSI, 773. Cp. HEFELE, *Conciliengesch.*[2], 3, 15.

conformity to Rome and of sincere obedience to its laws, particularly for such as had been enacted for Spain. Such were Leander, Bishop of Hispalis (Seville), and Isidore, another Bishop of the same city. The collections of canons made in Spain strongly insist on the obligatory character of Papal decrees. The compiler of the collection usually known as *Hispana*, who wrote at the beginning of the seventh century, says in his preface that, besides the conciliar decrees, he quotes also those of the Popes, "of which the authority, thanks to the supremacy of the Apostolic See, is not less than that of the Councils."[1]

545. If we now cross the Channel and glance at the **British Church**, we there meet with a somewhat isolated nation whose religious development had been, indeed, peculiar, but whose adherence to the Church of Rome, and submission to the bond of union she furnished, admit of no manner of doubt.

The ancient Church which the English missionaries found among the old Celtic population of the country, like the Scottish Churches, differed only on certain points of discipline from the other Churches of the West. The differences were in such matters as the reckoning of Easter, the manner of keeping the law of clerical celibacy, and the shape of the tonsure worn by the clergy, things of small moment which nevertheless gave rise to considerable friction with the missionaries. No doctrinal divergence, however, existed, least of all concerning the Roman Primacy. Any divergence upon such a subject, had it been present, would certainly have been brought forward in the controversies regarding lesser matters, for instance, during the negotiations of Augustine of Canterbury with the Celtic Bishops of the West, or during the quarrel between Wilfrid and Colman. As, however, Augustine demanded merely that the Celts should conform to certain usages of the Roman Church and support him in his endeavours to convert the Anglo-Saxons, he must have taken it for granted that the Britons acknowledged the Roman Church, otherwise his duty would have been to discuss this momentous question first.[2]

[1] MAASSEN, *Gesch. der Quellen*, p. 227: "*in quibus pro culmine sedis apostolicae non impar conciliorum exstat auctoritas.*"

[2] See FUNK, *Zur Gesch. der altbritischen Kirche*, in the *Hist. Jahrb.*, 4 (1883), 5–44, p. 19, and also in his *Kirchengesch. Abh.*, 1, 431 ff.

The Irish Bishops, assembled at Lenia (Leighlin) about the year 630, also seem to have acted according to the ancient customs of their country when they despatched an embassy to the Pope to settle the Paschal question. St. Patrick, the Apostle of Ireland, without a doubt preached and established the doctrine which he had himself received, and which comprised also belief in the Roman Primacy. The Irish Collection of Canons called after St. Patrick attributes to him, the statement that, in difficult questions, a decision must be sought of the Pope. Such a principle was in no wise at variance with the doctrine he had taught, for Patrick, in his so-called third Dictum, now recognised as genuine, urges the claims of Rome and the Empire: "The Church of the Scots," he says, "is a Church of the Romans. Be Christians, but in such wise as to be Romans also."[1]

An instructive commentary on these words is found in a remark, already quoted, of Columban, the great Irish founder of monasteries, who acknowledged to the Pope that he and his were "bound to the Chair of Peter," and who admitted that, if Rome was great in the eyes of his countrymen, this was not so much on account of the City's celebrity, but because it was the seat of the Apostle.[2]

Few indeed are the traces remaining of intercourse between the early British Church and the Papacy, and there is no doubt, as we have already conceded, that the growth of this insular Church was to some extent peculiar and independent. In spite of this, modern research has been able to qualify as utterly untenable the statement made not so long ago, that the Celtic Church was outside the sphere of the Apostolic See, and was quite free of Roman influence.[3]

[1] For National Synod of Lenia, see MANSI, 10, 611; HEFELE, 3, 78. According to Prosper (*Chron.*, an. 431), St. Palladius was sent by Pope Celestine as a missionary to the Britons. On St. Patrick, see DUCHESNE, *Bull. crit.*, 1888, p. 281 ff., his review of W. STOKES, *The Tripartite Life of Patrick;* BELLESHEIM, *Liter. Rundschau*, 1889, 336 ff.; *Gesch. der kath. Kirche in Irland*, 1, 37 ff., 128 ff. *Dictum III.: Aecclesia Scotorum immo Romanorum, ut Christiani ita et Romani sitis.*

[2] See above, p. 184.

[3] Consistorialrath Ebrard (*Die iroschottische Missionskirche des sechsten, siebenten und achten Jahrh.*, Gütersloh, 1873) set out to prove not only that the Celtic Church was free from Popery, but that, on account of its teaching, it was a forerunner of Protestantism. For the other side, see FUNK, p. 7 f., and BELLESHEIM, *Gesch. d. k. K. in Irland*, 1, 216.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE ROMAN SEE AND THE FRANKS

546. Though among the Franks ecclesiastical life had small freedom, the weak episcopate being controlled by the Merovingian kings, and the Church practically reduced to a national institution, yet there are many things which make it clear that the Frankish Church considered herself one of the daughters of the great family presided over by the Bishop of Rome, the custodian of unity. Bishops such as Cæsarius of Arles and Avitus of Vienne, who excelled their own period, and expressed so well the bond which unites all Churches in Rome,[1] were no longer to be met in the Frankish States, now riven asunder by ceaseless feuds. There everything had become petty, for the maladministration, the avarice, and ambition of the princely families, while stimulating intrigues and servility, discouraged all real progress. The memory of the many famous leaders of the early Church of Gaul was, however, still cherished, and, in the midst of all the oppression and the fratricidal wars, the protection and wholesome influence of the Mother-Church of Rome were never forgotten.

Among the Frankish Councils, which expressed in words their devotion to Rome, the second Council of Tours in 567 holds a prominent place. The assembled Bishops declared that they were only following the traditions of past times, in obeying the Papal decrees, for "what priest would dare gainsay the enactments of the Apostolic See?"[2]

The Councils of Aurelianum (Orléans), in 538, 541, and 549, either express in words their submission to the Roman See, or else clearly imply such submission. The ninth canon of the Council of Agatha (Agde) in 506, and the preamble of the second Council of Arausio (Orange), in 529, might also be quoted in this connection. The Metropolitan of the Province of Lugdunensis

[1] See present work, vol. ii. p. 292 ff.

[2] Cp. Con. Tur., can. 21. Mansi, 9, 798 (can. 20). Ed. Maassen (*Mon. Germ. hist., Auctt. antiq., Concilia aevi merov.*, 1893), p. 128: "*Quis sacerdotum contra decretalia, quae a sede apostolica processerunt, agere praesumat? . . . Patres nostri hoc semper custodierunt, quod eorum praecepit auctoritas.*"

Secunda, Leo of Senones (Sens) lodged an appeal, to be heard either by the Pope of Rome or by a Council, against a certain unheard-of encroachment by King Childebert I. on the Church's rights. Bishop Aunacharius of Antissiodorum speaks of Rome as a City revered by the whole world, where the direction of all Churches is concentrated.[1]

547. The Archbishops of Arles, owing to the facility their Metropolitan See afforded for intercourse between Rome and the Frankish countries, were usually appointed by the Popes "Vicars of the Apostolic See" for Gaul. Strictly speaking, they were Vicars only for that part of Gaul to which Arles, amidst the incessant political changes, happened to belong, for there only could the Apostolic Vicar exercise in practice his plenary powers, though both in Rome and at Arles itself the feeling prevailed that the See of Arles should convey to the whole of Gaul the influence of the Head of the Church for the benefit both of unity and discipline. In 545, as previously stated, Pope Vigilius raised Auxanius to the dignity of a Vicar, and, in 546, did the same for his successor Aurelian. Pelagius I., in 557, likewise promoted Sapaudus to the Vicariate, and Gregory I., in 595, Virgilius. The first three were to be Vicars throughout the kingdom of Childebert I., the fourth throughout that of Childebert II.[2]

According to the usual letter of authority sent by Rome to these Apostolic Vicars on their nomination, they were expected to watch over the course of ecclesiastical affairs, and to report on it to the Holy See; all Councils were to be held under their presidency, and they were to settle, "in the name of the Apostolic See," the disputes which might arise among the Bishops. Important matters, however, particularly such as related to the Faith, and which could not be decided in Gaul, were to be referred to

[1] Aurelianum, anno 538, can. 3; ed. MAASSEN, 74; MANSI, 9, 12 (can. 4). Aurelianum, anno 541, can. 1; MAASSEN, 187; MANSI, 9, 11. Aurelianum, anno 549, can. 1; MAASSEN, 101; MANSI, 9, 127. Agde and Arausio, see MAASSEN, *Gesch. der Quellen*, p. 227. Leo of Sens, in *P.L.*, LXVIII., 11. In his letter, written in the forties of the sixth century, we read: "*usque ad papae notitiam vel synodalem audientiam*," &c. On Aunacharius, cp. the letter to him of Pelagius II., in *P.L.*, LXXII., 705; ed. GUNDLACH (*Mon. Germ. hist. Epp.* 3), 448; JAFFÉ-KALTENBR., n. 1048: "*si mundo venerabilem iudicatis hanc urbem, si ad pacem sedis apostolicae cunctarum regere moderamina ecclesiarum praedicatis*," &c.

[2] See present work, vol. ii. p. 298. LANGEN (*Gesch. der röm. Kirche*, 2, 411), without adding any proof, states that Aunacharius of Antissiodorum was a Papal Vicar "of Gaul." The Papal letter (Oct. 31, 586) to which he refers contains nothing about this nomination.

Rome. Bishops were not at liberty to refuse attending such Synods as were convened by the Apostolic Vicar, and, if unavoidably detained, had at least to send a priest or deacon, who might report the decisions arrived at by the Vicar in the Pope's name, to all of which unconditional obedience was due.[1]

With the aid of the position and activity of the Papal Vicar at Arles, as Pelagius I. wrote to his own Vicar Sapaudus, the Popes trusted that the eternal stability of the everlasting Rock (Peter, the foundation-stone of the Church) would remain manifest in the authority of the successors of the Apostle and their Vicars. "The holy Fathers," he says, "willed that matters should be so arranged, and our forefathers transmitted the necessary powers to yours. . . . Thus, through God's grace, was the holy universal Church of God governed by our predecessors, who bestowed a portion of their cares on others."[2]

Few notices exist, among the sparse records preserved, of the measures taken by the Popes through their Vicars in the Frankish lands, or of the Vicars' intervention in Church affairs; in all likelihood their interference was not often called for.

We do hear, nevertheless, that in 545 Pope Vigilius commissioned his Vicar Auxanius to hold judgment upon Prætextatus, Bishop of Cavellio (Cavaillon), and to see that among the Franks Orders were bestowed canonically; further, that Sapaudus the Vicar gave Pope Pelagius I. due notice of a certain outrage committed against the Church, upon which Pelagius requested him to send fuller information; finally, that Pelagius lodged a formal complaint against the conduct of King Childebert in having, in a case in which Sapaudus the Archbishop and Vicar was concerned, summoned him to take his trial, with his chief suffragan-Bishop as his judge.[3]

In another case, we learn that Pelagius addressed a strongly

[1] Cp. especially the letter of Gregory I., sent on nomination of Virgilius, Archbishop of Arles (*Registrum*, 5, n. 58, 59, 60 (ed. MAUR., 5, n. 53, 54, 55); JAFFÉ-EWALD, n. 1374, 1375, 1376). In the letter to the Vicar's suffragans we read (5, n. 59): "*Quae a nostro Vicario Deo auxiliante fuerint definita, ad eum qui absens est, per ipsum quem miserit, fida relatione perveniant, ut inconvulsa firmitate serventur, et nullus* ea quae statuimus *audeat occasionis excusatione violare.*"

[2] To Sapaudus, ed. GUNDLACH (*Mon. Germ. hist., Epp.*, t. 3: *Epistolae merov. et carol. aevi*, 1892), 73; *P.L.*, LXIV., 405 ff.; JAFFÉ-KALTENBR., n. 945 ff.: "... *Sic ergo participata sollicitudine sanctam Dei universalem ecclesiam nostri per Dei gratiam rexere maiores.*"

[3] Vigilius to Auxanius, ed. GUNDLACH, 62: "*Licet fraternitati vestrae, apostolicae sedis vicibus attributis, quas directa auctoritate commisimus, generaliter emergentium causarum sit discutiendarum licentia, tamen . . . specialiter,*" &c. Sapaudus and Pelagius I., GUNDLACH, 69; *P.L.*, LXIX., 401; JAFFÉ-KALTENBR., n. 941. Pelagius and Childebert, GUNDLACH, 76; *P.L.*, LXIX., 406; JAFFÉ-KALTENBR., n. 948.

worded circular letter to Sapaudus and other Bishops, on account of the continuance of gross abuses in the country. Especially did he reprove the premature bestowal of episcopal consecration among the Franks, and lax toleration of superstitious remnants of idolatry. The Pope states that it had there become possible for a layman to be in a single day ordained cleric, acolyth, subdeacon, deacon, presbyter, and even Bishop. The complaint was not unfounded, but this abuse, and others likewise prevalent in Gaul arose through appointing to bishoprics men who were totally unqualified for the post, and who owed their advancement solely to the Court or to powerful factions.[1]

548. Of two Bishops, whose habits betray the barbarity of Gaul during these ages, an account has been left by the historian of the Franks in a narrative which bears the stamp of truth. Their story, which we are not at liberty to pass over in silence, also has a bearing on the relations of the Roman Primacy with the Frankish lands.

"In the battle of Mustiae-Calmes," writes Gregory of Tours, "there were two brothers, Salunius and Sagittarius, both Bishops (the former of Ebredunum, the latter of Vapingum). Their weapon was not, however, the heavenly cross, but they bore secular arms, helmets, and breastplates, and, what is more, with their own hands they were reported to have slain many. . . . There was also much murmuring against them. When they reached their own Bishoprics and could now again do as they willed, they began a mad course of robbery, bloodshed, murder, adultery, and other crimes. On one occasion, with a troop armed with swords and darts, they attacked Victor, the Bishop of Tricastra, who was then engaged in celebrating the anniversary of his elevation. Bursting in, they stript him of his clothing, thrashed the servants, and made off with the plate and all that had been prepared for the feast, leaving the unfortunate Bishop in a sad state of vexation. On hearing of this, King Guntram directed the holding of a Council in the city of Lugdunum."[2]

[1] JAFFÉ-KALTENBR., n. 978. The letter, first made known through the British Collection, and written between 558 and 560, was not, as Jaffé states, addressed to Sapaudus only, but also to other Bishops ("*quis ex* **vobis** . . . *redditurus est rationem*," &c.), perhaps to all the Bishops of the Vicariate. The bestowal of Holy Orders on monks is also dealt with.

[2] GREG. TUR., 4, c. 42; 5, c. 20 (21). Mustiae Calmes is perhaps Les Chamousses, near Embrun (Ebredunum). Vapingum is Gap; the city of Tricastra is S. Paul Trois-Châteaux.

Gregory further narrates how the Council, held under the presidency of Nicetius, found both of them guilty and deposed them. The culprits complained, however, to the King, who was still well-disposed towards them, and begged his permission to go to the Pope. "This petition the King granted, and even gave them letters to take with them. Coming to Pope John (III.), they told how they had been ousted from office, though the charges against them were of a most trivial character. Upon this the Pope sent letters to the King, commanding him to reinstate the supplicants, which the King also did without further ado, first administering due rebuke. The Bishops were, however, past redemption. . . . Every day they entangled themselves more and more in sin. . . . They raged against their burghers, and, in their fury, even flogged people till they bled. On new complaints being carried to the King, he again summoned them to appear before him."

Our authority proceeds to recount how they were condemned to solitary confinement in a monastery, particularly because Sagittarius had indulged in imprudent and insulting remarks regarding Guntram's illegitimate offspring. They were not released till long afterwards, and then only for a special reason. The eldest son of the King fell sick, and the partisans of the condemned men persuaded the King that it was a judgment from Heaven, because he had condemned innocent Bishops to do penance in monasteries. Sagittarius and Salunius for a while after their release behaved themselves a little better and made some show of zeal, but they soon relapsed into their evil ways, passing their days in revelry and in the company of women with whom they misconducted themselves.

"By the King's order," a Synod was at last held in 579 at Cabillonum (Châlons-sur-Saône), which again deposed the episcopal pair and sent them to prison. Both, however, contrived to escape, and began wandering about the country, till they met with the reward of their misconduct. Sagittarius was killed when on a warlike excursion.[1]

549. The account by Gregory of Tours which we have just given with its grimness unimpaired, shows a peculiarity of those times, *viz.* the part taken by the King in episcopal trials, in

[1] GREG. TUR., 5, c. 27 (28).

Councils, and in the execution of ecclesiastical sentences. The Bishops themselves, out of courtly habit, were wont to seek the King's assistance for their own affairs. Even worthy Pontiffs, amidst the savage lawlessness that prevailed everywhere, felt unequal to their task without the support of the secular power. The Popes were helpless face to face with such a sad state of affairs, and it may even be that their knowledge of these disorders was of the slightest, for the wars prevailing also in Italy created a chasm, and interfered with all intercourse. The Roman See accordingly as a rule left the settlement of ecclesiastical disputes to the Bishops and the rulers of the land, as Pope John III. may well have done in the case narrated, where he may have set aside merely temporarily the sentence against the two deposed Bishops, leaving the matter to be tried and judgment given at a Synod held in the country itself. Moreover in many cases the intervention of the Holy See must have been hampered by disagreements among the Bishops, and by the jealousy, ambition, and weakness rife among them.

As regards the Vicariate of Arles in particular, it is certain that it never quite fulfilled the expectations of the Popes, the causes responsible for its failure being the incapacity of the Vicars, the political chaos existing in the country, and the character of the authorities, secular and ecclesiastic.

It is, however, wrong to state, as certain authors do, that the rights of the Archbishop of Arles were never once acknowledged, even at the greater Councils in which, by virtue of his Vicariate, he was entitled to preside. On the contrary, no single Council took place in his presence at which he did not preside. In those Councils in which he does not appear as president, he had reasons for being absent, and, being under no obligation to attend, sent no representative.[1]

Among the Franks of that day, the Popes not only tacitly tolerated an extension of the King's authority to Church matters, but actually promoted it, whenever they fancied it would prove profitable to the commonwealth. It would have been difficult to

[1] See my argument against Löning and Hauck, in *Rom und die fränkische Kirche, vornehmlich im sechsten Jahrh.*, in *Zeitschr. für kath. Theol.*, 14 (1890), 447–493, p. 484 ff., and in my *Anal. rom.*, 1, 333 ff. This article may serve to complete what is said of the relations between Rome and the Franks. In DUCHESNE, *Fastes épiscopaux de l'ancienne Gaule* (1893, tom. 1), the facts concerning the Papal Primacy are scattered throughout the work, agreeably of course with the scope of the book.

find other means of repressing the lawlessness prevailing among the subjects, and, frequently, the good will of the monarch could be secured for the religious welfare of the people only at the cost of such concessions. Pelagius I., for instance, tells the piously disposed King Childebert I., upon whom he set great hopes, that "God willed that your Majesty should assume in this period the defence of the Church's peace against her enemies," and, on another occasion, he reminds him that God has confided the Churches to his protection. He takes care, however, to impress upon him that he must not venture to deal with Church affairs as he pleases, but must rather strive to see that the Church's ancient rules are duly carried out. In the case mentioned above, of the dispute with Sapaudus the Vicar, Pelagius does not scruple to reprimand the sovereign for having infringed the Church's law; nor may such an infringement be allowed to pass without a protest, lest it should become a precedent, and lead to confusion in the Churches; whilst fully acknowledging the praiseworthy manner in which the King takes to heart the care of the Church, it is nevertheless his duty to insure that no further steps be taken to the detriment of the Church's precepts; if Childebert wishes to be accounted truly pious, he must observe the ordinances of the Holy Fathers.[1]

The Popes, when appointing the Archbishops of Arles to the Vicariate, and bestowing on them the pallium, in the accompanying letter, wisely laid weight on the fact that this distinction was given at the King's request. There was a certain advantage in waiting until both the King and the Archbishop had approached the Holy See with a petition for the nomination, for in this way the danger was averted of any representative being appointed to whom the King might have taken exception.

In one such case Pope Vigilius took this diplomatic step, not only at the Court of Childebert, the Frankish King, but also at the Court of Byzantium, and refused to create Auxanius Vicar and bestow on him the pallium until the matter had been referred to the Emperor Justinian. Such hesitation was, however, an

[1] "*Deus gloriam vestram contra inimicos pacis ecclesiasticae misericorditer hoc tempore praeparavit.*" Pelagius I. to Childebert, GUNDLACH, 80; *P.L.*, LXIX., 408; JAFFÉ-KALTENBR., n. 946 and 908. "*Ecclesiae quas vobis Deus credidit,*" &c., GUNDLACH, 76; *P.L.*, LXIX., 406; JAFFÉ-KALTENBR., n. 948. "*Non aliter Deo nostro recte potest regalis devotio famulari, nisi providentia eius ecclesiasticorum ordinum servetur integritas.*" Ibid.

entirely new phenomenon in the history of the Western Church. It is true, so he remarks, he might have settled the matter without the Emperor's consent, but he prefers thus to demonstrate his respect. Such a policy of deference was peculiar to Vigilius, and is perhaps explained by the character of this unhappy Pope, and by the relations in which he stood to Byzantium. Of the other Popes, one only, *viz.* Gregory the Great, to a certain extent followed the example of Vigilius, in seeking the Emperor's advice before investing a Frankish Bishop with the pallium; he too seems, however, to have done so only in view of the strained relations existing between Rome and the suspicious Byzantine Court.[1]

The dealings of the Papacy with the new-born Western States, now occupying the ancient Provinces of the Empire, were watched in the East with ill-disguised jealousy and suspicion. Byzantium, with its rigid conception of legitimacy, found it difficult to relinquish the idea that the Emperor had a certain paramount authority over those countries.

Many in the West who were still Roman at heart, and among them the Popes, felt moreover that, in the right order of things, the New Nations should not only be on friendly terms, but also show their respect to the great Emperor of the Christian World. The Franks themselves, too, now that they had been converted and had learnt to appreciate Roman civilisation, were technically no longer mere barbarians (*barbarae nationes, gentes*), who, according to the theory in vogue, should by right be subjugated to the Roman Empire. Conformably with the prevalent views, approved also by the Church, they were fitted to become honoured allies of the Roman State, to which, however, the highest rank was always due. This is what Pope Pelagius I. means when he calls the Roman Emperor the "Father" of the Frankish Kings, and this in an official document, addressed to the Kings themselves with no fear of wounding their susceptibilities. Pope Vigilius also

[1] Vigilius to Auxanius: Reason demands ("*ratio postulat*") that the Emperor should be consulted; in this wise we give him "*honor fidei.*" GUNDLACH, 58; *P.L.*, LXIX., 26; JAFFÉ-KALTENBR., n. 912. Cp. second letter to the same, GUNDLACH, 61; *P.L.*, LXIX., 27; JAFFÉ-KALTENBR., n. 913; also that to Aurelian, GUNDLACH, 65, *P.L.*, LXIX., 37, JAFFÉ-KALTENBR., 918. GREGOR. M., *Registrum*, 8, n. 4 (MAUR., 9, n. 11), ed. HARTMANN (*Mon. Germ. hist., Epp., t.* 2), 2, p. 5; *P.L.*, LXXVII., 951; JAFFÉ-EWALD, n. 1491, on granting of the pallium to Syagrius, Bishop of Autun: "*Et serenissimi domni imperatoris, quantum nobis diaconus noster, qui apud eum responsa ecclesiae faciebat, innotuit, prona voluntas est et concedi hoc omnino desiderat.*" Cp. *Zeitschr. für kath. Theol.*, 14 (1890), 487–491 *Anal. rom.*, 1, 377 ff.

admonishes them concerning the duty, which to them is an advantage, of maintaining intact the "friendship and alliance" with the Empire. The imperial theory of the Later Middle Ages is closely connected with this view taken by the Popes of the authority of the Roman Empire.[1]

550. The state of the Church among the Franks was as yet as far removed from what it was when Charles the Great was raised to the Roman Empire as the Greek Emperors were far from being supreme rulers or heads of a confederation of all nations in East and West. The Franks, as we have seen, acknowledged the Roman Primacy, and belonged to the Church Catholic, yet we cannot help noticing that the ties uniting the country to the Popes were now less intimate than when Gaul still formed an integral part of the Roman Empire. The frequent and intimate intercourse of early times with the Apostolic See was no longer evident, and what Popes Siricius, Innocent I., Zosimus, Leo, Hilary, Anastasius II., and others had done for the Gallican Church, could not easily be repeated under the Merovingians. In this we can perceive the disadvantage due to the breaking away of these countries from the Christian Empire. It was in consequence of this separation, that the disunion of the sovereigns, their selfish aims, and a certain national exclusiveness, raised difficulties against even the most kindly meant influences coming from abroad.

Under Gregory the Great we shall find intercourse growing more frequent between the Franks and the Holy See, but, later, in the seventh century, our authorities mention but few communications as having taken place. During this period acknowledgment of the Primacy was shown principally by attachment to the Church's unity. Any one acquainted with the organisation of the Church is, however, aware that the Primacy of the Popes need not be incessantly manifested by the exercise of their authority, for the very fact of belonging to the Catholic Church involves, in all who do, submission to the visible, Divinely appointed Head of the Church. "When we confess one only Church of God," writes Pelagius II. to the Frankish Bishop

[1] Pelagius I., see above, p. 43, note. Vigilius in a letter to Aurelian, Archbishop of Arles, when investing him with the Vicariate: it is necessary above all "*gratiae intactae foedera custodire.*" GUNDLACH, 65; *P.L.*, LXIX., 37, 39; JAFFÉ-KALTENBR., n. 918, 919.

Aunacharius, "we mean that we are all established upon the one rock on which Christ has founded the Catholic Faith." [1]

## Review of the Progress made by the See of Rome

551. The historic part in history already taken by the Papacy warranted the assurance that the Church of Rome would prove equal to all future tasks. Unprecedented difficulties, both from within and from without, had been overcome by the marvellous power of the Primacy. Thanks to the Popes, the Church had brilliantly demonstrated that she could stand alone, though the Roman Empire upon which she had once reckoned for support was fast sinking into ruin. And not only did this mighty body preserve its footing, but, with the help of the spirit of unity infused into it from Rome, at the downfall of the ancient polity and civilisation, it was able to save for futurity the best elements of the past.

The Roman Empire had afforded the Church a protection, not unaccompanied by risks.

When, in the time of Silvester and Constantine, peace was concluded between the Roman Bishop and the Roman State, the Church could scarcely have foreseen that the Empire would assume, as in point of fact it did, the right of wilfully interfering in Church matters. The Christian Emperors, misguided by their worldly authority, repeatedly made heresy the law, and opposed their own will and even their weapons to the authority of the Bishops of Rome.

It was Arianism which put the Church's unity to its greatest test. Against this heresy laboured Julius I. and Damasus with a whole array of chosen Fathers, to whom they lent their weight, strenuously defending against the secular power the true Faith and the Church's independence.

The struggle against Pelagianism was undertaken, at the beginning of the fifth century, by Pope Innocent, and after him by Pope Celestine, who, both of them, worked hand in hand with the African Bishops.

If, in these earlier encounters, the reputation of the Primacy

[1] Pelagius II. to Aunacharius: "*Nec aliter unam solamque Dei confitemur ecclesiam, nisi omnes ad petram, super quam fundata est fides catholica, construamur.*" GUNDLACH, 449; *P.L.*, LXXII., 744; JAFFÉ-KALTENBR., n. 1057.

had already increased owing to its having contributed so large a part to the saving of the Church's unity, much more was this the case during the war waged by Celestine and Xystus III. against the Nestorians and in the long-drawn struggle against the Eutychians and the heretical government in which took part Pope Leo the Great and his successors, Hilary, Simplicius, Felix III., Gelasius, Symmachus, and Hormisdas.

The new nations were then already pouring into Italy, yet the activity of the Bishops of Rome and their watchfulness over the whole Church never ceased amidst the surrounding dangers and distress. The Holy See even grew in honour during those arduous times, for it was seen to be the only power capable of protecting Rome and Italy. Leo I. and Gelasius, in both West and East, displayed an authority which can only be compared with that exercised by the great Popes of the Middle Ages.

The Popes cleared away the luxuriant, delusive remains of Roman Paganism; wisely and carefully they adapted to Christian use all that was good in classicism. Leo the Great and his successors, Hilary, Gelasius, and Symmachus, earned undying honour for their services in this direction. Barbarism paralysed the joyous creations of ancient Art, but the Popes provided a resting-place in the Basilicas for its last productions. The Schools had reached the end of their career, but the Church of Rome, with the assistance of such votaries of ancient learning as Cassiodorus, at least made a fine attempt to rescue classical studies from total neglect. When savagery was everywhere rampant, the Eternal City sent St. Benedict into the neighbouring mountains of Subiaco, where, in Western monasticism, he created what was at once a pillar of good morals and piety, and the strongest lever for the civilisation of the Middle Ages.

When Odovacar's rule in Rome, and that of Theodoric the Ostrogoth and his nation, gave rise to dissensions in the bosom of the Roman Church, and when, in Theodoric's last years, he became a foe of Rome, Symmachus and Hormisdas handled the difficulties with tact and firmness, and John I. laid down his life for the peace of the Church. At the very time when the Northern Kings established their government in such dangerous proximity to the Papal See, the quarrelsome East increased the peril by wrenching itself away from unity through

the Acacian schism. With what emphasis did Simplicius and Felix III. show on this occasion to their adversaries beyond the seas the place allotted by God to the powers ecclesiastical and secular! The Acacian schism, thanks to the help vouchsafed to the Popes by Providence, was eventually healed, and the clearer definition of the rights of the two powers was not the least among the fruits of the prolonged trial.

The names of Silverius and Vigilius remind us of a melancholy period in the history of the Roman Church. Pope Vigilius, wavering and without determination, had to experience sad humiliations in the Greek capital. Pope Pelagius I., who succeeded him, had both a clearer mind and greater courage, and was not even afraid to confess and defend his own change of view in the matter of the fifth Council. Pelagius witnessed with misgiving the beginning of the interminable Three-Chapter schism; he saw the increase of barbarism among the Franks, due to Merovingian misrule, and elsewhere in the other newly founded States similar obstacles placed in the way of the Church's free action. In Rome, however, he was cheered by the restoration of the Byzantine Imperial rule after the victories of Narses, for the Roman Empire, even under an Eastern sovereign, in spite of all its shortcomings, was still the best pledge of order. Though often compelled to protest against interference by the Emperors in Church affairs, the successors of Pelagius I., John III., Benedict I., and Pelagius II., with the fidelity to be expected of Romans, remained true to the Empire.

A darker future seemed suddenly to yawn before Rome on the Lombard invasion, for had Rome been subjugated, as it seemed imminent, then the Holy See would have sunk into a state of abject dependence during the long rule of the Lombards. The Pope would have been a mere creature of a line of tyrannical Kings. In its straits He who guides His Church protected the See of Peter, and Rome's towers and walls withstood the fierce onslaught.

Though, during the Lombard storms, communication between Rome and the Eastern Empire became increasingly precarious, this was far from being detrimental to the City. The Papacy was compelled to protect and save Rome without the aid of the Empire, and its protection was felt, not in the City alone, but also over a great part of Italy. In this wise a new position

was taken by the *Urbs Æterna*, and the glory of her See was further enhanced.

The man appointed to lead with prudence and self-denial the Roman Church to her new point of vantage was **Gregory the Great,** the same Pope who, through his efforts on behalf of the spiritual welfare of the new nations when the ancient world was crumbling to pieces, laid the foundation of the new world of the Middle Ages.

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